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THE AMERICAN EAGLE

Vol. XXV, No. 2

BRUCE McALESTER, Editor

Winter, 1943



A Full-Length War-Air Action Novel THE FERRYING COMMAND

By LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN

The American Eagle rides the blue above the African desert to lead a mass raid on Axis supply lines and clear the sky trails for the winged cargoes of victory!

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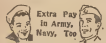
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**RICH REWARDS
IN RADIO**



Around the Hangar



A Department

for Readers

YEAH, we don't blame you for not looking us in the eye when we came into this briefing room. We are going to start ripping some bars loose in a minute and kick certain twerps into line and it will be corporal punishment if you get what we mean.

All right, which one of you alleged aviators or reasonable facsimile let Horace the goat loose so he could get that scrap metal heap we started out near the anti-aircraft battery? And which one was it who put all our loving cups in the heap?

The only one we saved was from the Paree Rotary Club in 1918. We got it for flying a Spad under the *Arc de Triomphe* with three *Folies Bergere* dames sitting on each wing.

Where were we? We remember now—we have great news for the guys who are too young to get a crack at the Nazis and the Japs, even if the war lasts three more years, which it won't.

Start 'em Young!

Two government bureaus and the Air Training Corps of America are preparing 2,000,000 boys and girls for the aviation force of the future, by giving them pre-flight training. These agencies are receiving the cooperation of all high schools in the country and if the student wishes it, he can add this vital training to his curriculum.

The schools will be supplied with manuals and text books on aerodynamics, design and structure, meteorology, communications, airplane engines and air safety. Competent instructors will be available for the mammoth program designed to make this country supreme in the air for the years to come.

The ATCA will encourage youths of the schools to organize aviation-cadet corps and it will give pre-flight military training and adapted physical drill with Army and Navy collaboration.

The chance you have been begging for these last few years, kids. Today, Britain has 275,000 boys and girls in the ATC.

Look at the Record

Maybe Al Williams is right, but actual reports from the front seem to disagree

with his recent articles in a New York newspaper. "Why can't we have fighter planes as good as the Japs and Germans?" he wants to know. Well, Al has forgotten more about military aviation than we will ever know but as Will Rogers used to say, "All I know is what I see in the newspapers."

Zero planes, the crack Jap fighters, are being smeared in bunches in the South Pacific. The Tomahawk played hell with the Krauts in Libya. The R.A.F. haven't returned the Kittyhawks marked N. G. We



must admit we have not heard as much as we expected from the P-39—the Bell Airacobra. We do not assume to contradict Al Williams. But to quote another famous American, "Let's look at the record!"

Oswald Connects

You try hard enough at anything and you are bound to succeed. The air corps accepted Oswald Klipspringer, our old squadron pal in the last fuss, to help out in a special job.

Oswald is going to teach glider pilots an old trick he mastered in France. Oswald landed more planes with a dead stick than any pilot in the last war and he never overshoot or undershot an airdrome once. The idea of the officers running the glider department of U. S. aviation is to put future sailplane addicts into light planes with engines and then to make them cut the engine off and glide in.

Then when they are up in a glider and something goes wrong, they won't have a

(Continued on page 8)



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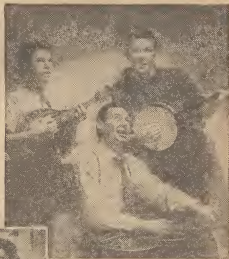
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*R. M., Vancouver, B. C.

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Surprised Friends. People who hear me play don't understand how I do it. They ask if I haven't had lessons from a teacher. To their surprise they find I haven't. I'm glad to be a student of your School. *M. H., Athol, Kans.



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AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 6)

handy engine to help them out. Oswald is going to demonstrate gliding in a light crate that has an engine in the nose.

We do not know of a better instructor as one day after dark at Du Jour, France, Oswald landed a Spad, dead stick, between a bakery and a drug store. There was not enough space between the tips of his wings and the sides of the buildings to shove a playing card through.

The U.S. knows how to pick instructors. He must have bluffed through the eyesight test as his astig— we had better not mention it.

Don't Believe It!

During the last few weeks we have been reading about the propaganda that has come out of Goebbel's big mouth. Living conditions in Australia, the food and everything there so bad, our A.E.F. boys are going insane! The British lay off the Krupp works because Churchill has an interest in them! We have only 21 anti-aircraft guns in



the U.S.! The Queen Mary carrying fifteen thousand Yank soldiers was sunk outside Boston Harbor! A sub beached on the Massachusetts coast showed that it had bread from Boston bakeries in its pantry!

Rumor spreaders are as much a threat to our war effort as a saboteur with a time bomb in his pocket. The Nazis cook up new ones every day and there seem to be plenty of mouthpieces in this country to peddle them. **DON'T BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU HEAR** that sounds pro-Axis.

You can tell if it is or not, for just sniff at the air around the teller of the tall Teuton tale and you'll scent the halitosis kitty.

Our Letter Box

With all the mail stacked up in the corner, we have to forget everything else and wade into it. Hand them over, Flannelmouth. We will be able to publish some of the letters we could not publish in the past as we have a projector and screen we purchased cheap from the briefing room of an R.A.F. outfit in England. Heret-

fore, it was impossible to decipher some of the letters that must have been written during a blackout or while the subscriber was handcuffed.

Bob Hetrick, 4431 Sunnyside Ave., Brookfield, Ill., gets briefed first and he says a lot with what little ink he used. This is it.

I'll have to admit I don't like some of your stories, but that's no reason for me to kick about your magazine because there are some good stories and features in it. You always have a good model in your magazine, but how about us peeliots who like to build scale models and make realistic displays? I would suggest you get your wits together and put in the plans for the Allied and German planes of World War I. I'm running out of patience and ink, so I'll say Forever yours till Ambrose goes West.

Live and let live, is Bob's motto and he knows nothing in this vale of tears is perfect. For his kind of guy, we'll try to make **THE AMERICAN EAGLE** better and better.

From H.B.R. comes a message that makes our stint on this station much easier to bear. He fills part of this column with some hints to sixth columnists who seek to undermine us here. Here is H.B.R.

I lost my membership coupon, but I will enclose all the information and such like. So a certain Mr. Chunn doesn't like the book? Well, ain't that just too bad? I for one like the book and, judging by all the rest of the letters, so does everybody else.

Maybe we can read about this war or, as Ambrose Hoodley calls it, *guerre* in the newspapers, but we still ought to keep out most of the first war stories because this is the war our boys are fighting in. A Hoodley Howler is okay every issue, but the other ones aren't so hot.

So our dear friend thinks we ought to send more troops and planes everywhere. He had better send the ships to ship them in. He's just so much hot air so don't let him get you going. His ideas are punk and I would write him and tell him so if I wasn't afraid of being arrested for using the U. S. Mail service to write threatening letters. Keep 'em flying, and tell Joe Archibald and Oswald to keep up the good work.

Nice going, H.B.R. Buzz us here at the station anytime. Code name is generally "Betterpubs" which does not mean we have an estaminet in the lounge.

Now we pick up a letter from Billy White, 906 Chislett St., Pittsburgh. This letter came clean from Pittsburg and is that possible? But meet Bill.

I bought one of your magazines recently and I think it's swell. Enclosed you will find 15¢ and a name-strip for my set of World War I Aces. Why don't you put John Masters in the First World War? I would appreciate it if you would put more World War I stories in your book.

The bill for aspirin consumed by our directors trying to decide on World War I or II stories, you wouldn't believe, Billy. However, we don't mind giving them more headaches. These brass hats are here for the duration and don't dare quit.

Flannelmouth asks how is our blood pressure as he hands us the next flimsy.

Let us look at this offender's insult. We

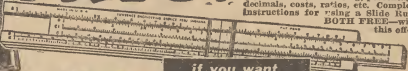
(Continued on page 10)

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AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 8)

have with us now one Jack Jones, R.F.D. 4, Mechanicsville, N. Y.

If I may be so bold as to ask, "Why in ---- do they keep a department like yours in an otherwise good mag?" If you have an answer to this question I certainly would love to hear what it is. I think Horace the goat is the only sensible creature in this department.

I have been reading THE AMERICAN EAGLE now for some time, and on the whole I think it is a good mag. However, I have quite a number of friends who agree with me when I say you should continue printing plans for the planes of the first Big Fuss. In my opinion, John Masters should remain in the past because in actual life you don't hear of any former War Aces flying the fast new pursuit jobs because they would be too old to stand the punishment of throwing planes around the sky.

Nearly all the other mags are printing only modern stories and plans, so it would really be a pleasure to find a mag with stories of the good old days.

Well, I have sounded off long enough, but before I close I would like to be enrolled in the "Lone Eagles of America" club. I also am enclosing the three name-strips for the World War Aces portraits. I feel sure many others will agree with me if you would print this.

Jack insults us to start his letter, then goes on to say how he likes THE AMERICAN EAGLE. We have an answer, pal. We run this department so citizens like you can blow off steam to show you we still have free speech in this country. Masters is all right in this war.

Here is a report from a satisfied client named Charles. Murphy, 1822 Kavanaugh, Little Rock, Ark.

I have been reading your mag for almost two years, and I have enjoyed every bit of it. I am like a lot of the others, I read the department AROUND THE HANGAR, and like it very much. I am enclosing my membership coupon and a stamped self-addressed envelope for my membership card. Please list me as a pen pal, too. I am seventeen years old and I am five feet eleven inches and I weigh one hundred seventy pounds. I will trade letters with anybody from anywhere.

Keep John Masters in the present and keep Joe Archibald's stories coming and I will be satisfied. I wish that you would print THE AMERICAN EAGLE every month. I read all the other mags that you print, but I like THE AMERICAN EAGLE the best of them all. Please put more short stories in the mag and I think that it will be much better.

Nice work, Charlie. When Joe A. comes in to poison the atmosphere with one of his three-for-a-nickel Connecticut smoke torches, we will tell him what you said. This winter, the little goon is going to Florida to take the place of a smudge pot in an orange grove.

We have a new correspondent in Robert

(Continued on page 12)



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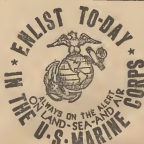
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AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 10)

George McLaury, U.S.N.R., 415 Thompson St., St. Louis, Missouri. George does well for a starter but we wish he would make up his mind about this war and the last, or was it a slip of the pencil, George? Get all of this.

I have read quite a few copies of **THE AMERICAN EAGLE** and I think it is the best. My hobby is sailing, but you can't sail all of the time so I turn to airplanes. Tell Fritz Duval if he doesn't like the U. S. to go over to Germany. I am in the U. S. N. Reserves, and I hope to get a chance to kick some of the German navy down to Davey Jones' locker.

I agree with my fellow readers, leave John Masters in World War II and forget World War I. It is over with and gone.

Keep those Navy models coming. We need them.

I hope Lenwella takes notice, I agree with her on two points. Let's have more World War I stories and, say, Joe Archibald, how about putting some length on your stories?

Say, if Fritz Duval doesn't like your mag, he doesn't have to buy it. That will make one more mag for somebody else to read who will enjoy it. This is my first correspondence and I hope I didn't make it too strong. How about more stories similar to **GRASSHOPPER WINGS**? I thought it was tops. I would like to be enrolled as a member of the Lone Eagles of America.

You said the first war was over and done with, George. Then you agree with a doll that says give out with World War I stories. But you like **THE AMERICAN EAGLE** and you can say anything you want around here.

Comes next a letter from one of our battling English cousins, R. Brettell, 10 Garden Lane, Cleadon, Durham, England. He wants to thank the Yanks for writing him. Step up, old boy.

I'd like to thank you for getting me so many pen pals. Believe it or not, I've only been a member of **THE AMERICAN EAGLE** one year, yet I have seven pen pals, and expect more. Soon I'll have to hire a secretary. Also thank those that wrote to me. Between us, America, Russia and Great Britain, we'll end this strife, you'll see.

If you need a good secretary, we can lend-lease you one. Confidentially, this blonde info wren we have out in the plexi-glass turret knows too much about our personal affairs, Mr. Brettell. She would blackmail us as quick as Hitler would stab an orphan in the back. How is everything over there? Just write us again if the pen pals stop cooperating and we will take it up with Washington. Lowel Gaskill, R.R. 3, Auburn, Indiana, writes us a nice lengthy opus. We give it to you verbatim:

Although this is the first time I've written to you, it isn't the first time I've read **THE AMERICAN EAGLE**. The first issue of the mag—I just thought it was like any other airplane magazine, but listen, it's a lot different. (On the good side,



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too.) That guy Morgan sure knows how to write. Joe Archibald isn't so bad, but he isn't as good as Scott Morgan.

And tell Morgan to put the Lockheed P-38 and the Bell P-39 in his stories. They are my two favorite airplanes. I would be piloting one or the other if I was old enough.

I am very much interested in aviation and try to read up on all the latest news. Any of you who has any airplane magazines or booklets I will swap my stamps and other things for them.

I also read SKY FIGHTERS and think it is a very good magazine.

Morgan will love what you said, Lowell. The P-38 is a nice looking crate, isn't it? Every time one goes over we run out and look at it.

But Flannemouth is jittery again and we caught him trying to censor part of the next contribution. We print everything in this department, even the way customers address us. Richard Broderick, 130 East 82nd St., New York City, can call us anything after what he says about our stories.

Morgan writes swell stories. Archibald is funnier than Bob Hope. You go from the sublime to the ridiculous. What a bunch of tripe you print. They should lengthen Archibald's stories and cut your space to a page. Even so, you can't drag down the worthiness of this book from its top ranking position.

Aside from that, I am fifteen years old, five feet eight inches tall, have blues eyes and would like to correspond with readers who are of my own age.

Yours till the Dodgers win the World's Series, which means forever.

Drop in and see us write our department any old time, Dick, especially when

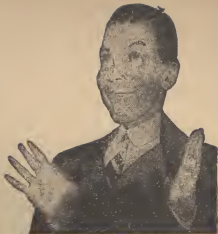
(Continued on page 89)

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as a dodo



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by Don Herold

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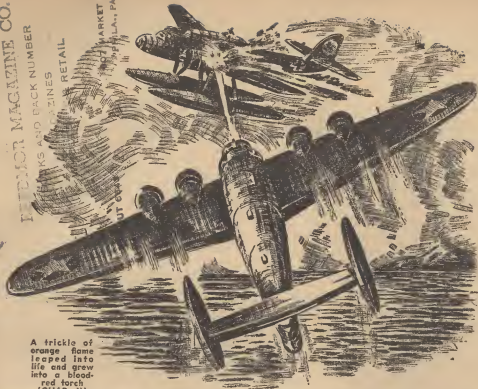
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A trickle of
orange flame
leaped into
life and grew
into a blood-
red torch
(CHAP. II)

THE FERRYING COMMAND

By **LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN**

The American Eagle rides the blue above the African desert to lead a mass raid on Axis supply lines and clear the sky trails for the winged cargoes of victory!

CHAPTER I

Toward the Unknown

THE giant four-motored B-24 hurtled eastward under a canopy of star-studded velvet. Behind it lay Natal, Brazil, the jumping-off place for the Air Force Ferry Command. Ahead, somewhere under the dim rim of the horizon was Africa, hiding a secret field used as a relay

depot for the planes bound for the Near East and the Orient.

And somewhere beyond that refueling center lay a grim and terrible secret. Somewhere over there planes disappeared, how or why Intelligence officers were at their wits' end to discover.

That it was another Hitler scheme they were certain. But even Hitler, was no superman, even though he con-

A COMPLETE FULL-LENGTH AIR ACTION NOVEL

sidered himself one. For it would take a wizard to lift four-engined bombers out of the sky and leave British and Americans none the wiser.

Then it was that the one and only man it was felt certain could cope with the puzzle had been called into the picture. That man was John Masters. Known to friend and foe as the American Eagle, Masters was beloved by those who fought to be free men, and hated by despots who sought to grind a world of conquered millions under blood-smearred heels.

As always, ready and eager for the call to serve his fellow-man, Masters now sat at the controls of the B-24, his eyes narrowed as he considered the meager bits of information Lieutenant General Tremaine had been able to give him when the high Intelligence official had contacted Masters and Phil Warren aboard a fishing cruiser off Miami.

Warren sat in the cockpit with the Eagle now, his companion in this adventure, as he had been his companion in practically every battle Masters had waged with Nazi gangsters.

The scene the morning before, when Tremaine had dropped out of the sky on them, while Warren had been battling a white marlin, was registering on Masters' memory. The sea had been like a freshly poured batch of blue plastic. A shoal of flying fish, driven to the surface by some undersea marauder had skittered by, their wings a bright blur in the morning sun. Masters recalled how a pelican had done a dive-bombing act for a chunk of bait the captain had tossed over the side.

THIS sure is the life, John," Warren had been saying, tussling with his marlin, when the skipper had touched Masters on the shoulder and pointed to a PBY coming toward them from the west.

"Navy job," Masters had said, watching the big seaplane.

"Hey!" Warren had yelped. "Signal for those crazy Joe Gishes to scramble off with the flying tug! They'll make my fish nervous."

"I think I smell something," was all Masters had said, as the big seaplane had splashed in and begun to taxi toward the fishing boat.

Warren's face had been livid with rage at the pilot who had dared to set down on top of the biggest fish he had ever tied into. But a broad grin had lighted Masters' own face as he had recognized the man at the open hatch behind streamlined struts.

"General Tremaine!" he had cried. "Want to join us in a little fishing? Be all set to do some real angling as soon as Phil lands that bait he's tied into."

"Bait, my eye!" Warren had snorted. "This one weighs about three tons!"

General Tremaine had crawled down the ladder and leaped into the boat to grasp Masters' hand.

"Been combing the Gulf Stream for you two. Instead of fishing, I've got some big game hunting for you to do."

"Where and why?" Masters had asked.

"Africa," Tremaine had told him soberly. "We're losing planes."

"Libya?" Masters had asked.

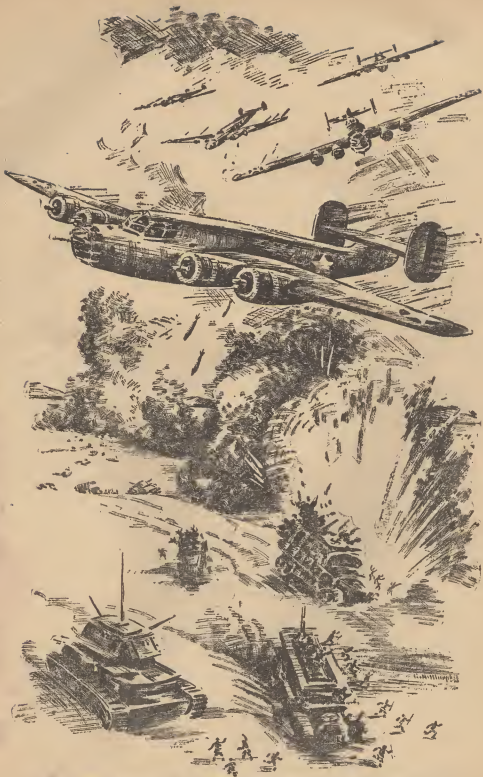
Tremaine had shaken his head. "The AFFC has tangled with something between Stations Three XB and Four K. Planes take off, and just disappear. We expect some losses, but five planes in one week are too much."

"So?" Masters had asked eagerly.

Now he recalled Tremaine's grin. "You're heading for Africa," he had said. "There'll be a ship on the run-way for you at Natal. You and Warren will take over as a ferry crew. From then on you'll be on your own." He had glanced at the PBY. "Here's a flying yacht all set for the trip to Natal. Plenty of fuel for the motors, and a crate of food for Phil."

Masters remembered how the weathered face of the gray-haired Chief of Air Intelligence had wrinkled into a smile, and Masters himself grinned at the memory of how all Warren had said, slowly relinquishing his line, with one last regretful glance at that fish:

"Flying the big drink again, eh?" He had looked speculatively toward the east. "If you'll fly low enough I wouldn't mind trolling on the way across. Ought to be some nice big ones out there in the middle, if these things around here are called bait. Well, let's get going."



Nazi supply dumps were ablaze, supply columns shattered, as Masters began to climb (CHAP. XIII)

Swift-flying hours had passed since then, and now an opalescent smear streaked the eastern skies as Masters and Warren sipped a cup of hot coffee handed forward to them by one of the crew.

"So we're setting down on this spot they call Three XB," Warren said as he handed his empty cup over his shoulder to the navigator who held a steaming thermos bottle. "Suppose we do a disappearing act, too?"

"That's what we're here for," Masters said, as his eyes swept the instrument panel. "You know I was just thinking, Phil—"

"Says you," Warren retorted. "Okay, go on. What were you thinking about? Some way of getting into trouble after we squirm out of this mess?"

MASTERS shook his head.

"I was thinking how different flying is from what it was in the last war, when a fellow was sort of on his own. Maybe two men in a crate, flying by miss and by gosh. Now it's teamwork. Every man's got a job. Take this trip for instance. I'm nothing more than a flying chauffeur. Experts built the ship, experts put it in condition for the flight and I've got a flock of darned well-trained guys to help me take it to Africa."

Warren turned to look at his companion.

"I guess you're right," he said slowly. "This flying game has turned into a business where teamwork counts. If a pilot hasn't got a navigator who can aim for a postage stamp three thousand miles away and at least hit the perforations the pilot isn't going to be much good."

Masters nodded. "And pilot or navigator aren't worth much if they haven't got a man up front in the goldfish bowl who can lay an egg on that postage stamp. There's the guy who's going to play a major part in the winning of this war—the bombardier. You got to have egg-layers, and I don't mean Leghorns."

Warren nodded, too, in agreement. "It takes cold nerve to sit up there and watch the enemy throw everything but the kitchen sink at you, while you fuss around lining up a

target on the cross-lines of the bomb-sight."

"Not only nerve but concentration," Masters said slowly. "If he fails the whole mission is a failure, I don't care how good the pilot and navigator happen to be!"

The radio officer stuck his head into the control cabin.

"I've been getting some queer garbled stuff for the past hour or so, Mr. Masters," he said. "I got a hunch it's in code."

"Take it down," Masters said. "I'll have a go at it as soon as we land."

"Funny thing, it's been getting louder," the radio officer said. "We must be approaching the transmitter."

Masters' eyes narrowed and he turned to Warren.

"That might mean a raider under us somewhere. Tremaine said a couple of them were on the loose in the South Atlantic. After convoys."

Warren glanced out of the cockpit. "Too dark to see anything down there yet," he said.

And it was as he spoke that something exploded along the starboard wing.

A fragment of metal came hurtling out of the night and smashed against the shatter-proof glass just in front of Warren.

"For Pete's sake!" Warren gasped. "What was that?"

Masters kicked on rudder and banked to the left.

"That was a Hun slug, Phil!" he shouted, then called through the interphone. "Gunnery on your toes! We're being jumped!"

Holding the B-24 in a steep bank, Masters scanned the skies anxiously. Twice he thought he caught a dark blur against a cluster of stars. The gunner in the tail let go with a sharp burst.

"Hold your fire until you have a target!" he called to the gunner. "We may be in for it."

For a few moments the only sound was the roar of the four "Twin-Wasps," as the grim game of hide-and-seek went on.

"Wish he'd open up again," Masters growled. "Like to get a hint of where he was."

As if in answer to his wish streams

of tracer poured a concentrated funnel of fire on the B-24.

"There's more than one!" Warren yelled.

Masters nodded grimly as he concentrated on getting the ship out of the cone of blazing death.

AS HE straightened out, a flare fizzed into life high above him and came floating through the night. It cast an eye-searing flood of light around the B-24, while Masters needed the motors in order to gain the darkness.

"Masters . . . calling John Masters . . . calling John Masters," a crisp voice with a trace of the accent he hated poured into his phones.

Masters pulled his right phone tight over his ear.

"Now what?" Warren's lips formed the words.

Masters shook his head and listened for the voice again.

"John Masters—are you listening?" the strange voice went on. "You had better land at once. There is no escape this time."

"Dumb cluck!" Warren roared. "Does he think we're gonna land down there?"

"You are outnumbered, Masters," the voice snapped. "You have stuck your nose into our affairs for the last time. I have been waiting for you. It was tiresome, but I am being rewarded for my patience."

"You and Hitler!" Warren snarled as he stuck his head out of the cabin and tried to catch a glimpse of the night fighters. "Hey, John!" he shouted as he pulled his head in. "There's a ship down there! I can see it by the light of the flare."

Masters looked down on the vessel riding the Atlantic ten thousand feet below.

"One of the raiders," he growled.

"Masters, set down close to that ship," the voice insisted. "You cannot win through to the coast. Put down and you will be picked up."

"And wouldn't that be pleasant," Masters jeered as he reached for the mike. "Who are you?" he called.

"Perhaps you will recognize the name," came the taunting voice. "Or have you forgotten a morning long



ago over Lake Tana? Do you recall how you failed to bring the skull of the Sultan Mkwawa back to his people?"

"Kramer!" Masters breathed. "It can't be! I killed Kramer that morning. Shot him down in flames!"

"Hey!" Warren shouted. "Let's scramble out of here before these Nazis make hamburger out of us!"

"You recall the name, perhaps?" the voice insisted.

Grimly Masters prayed for the dawn to come thundering out of the east. And he was recalling another dawn, years before, a dawn when he and a Hun named Kramer had fought for possession of what some might have thought only a bit of bone. But it had been much more than that—a fetish prized highly by the men of the Sultan Mkwawa, a glob of brown skull by which the German and a traitor who called himself the "Jackal" had sought to bring destruction on the heads of the Allies.

And here once again, with a dawn creeping over the distant shores of Africa, the dread name Kramer had been resurrected.

"You remember the Jackal?" the voice came thundering into the Eagle's ears. "I have promised I will bring you to him alive. With that metal claw of his he swears he will tear your heart out, John Masters!"

CHAPTER II

Out of the Past

MASTERS' brain galvanized into action. The Jackal, a sinister, loathsome figure with an artificial hand constructed of metal, was something no man would wish to meet again. But the Jackal, who had tried vainly to swing his people over to the Huns was dead, buried under the mountain in which he'd had his lair.

The voice of Kramer, though, was still coming through the air, the voice of a man very much alive. Could it be possible that the Jackal was still waiting in the jungle? But no—that could only be a miracle, and the Eagle refused to believe in such miracles.

"Why don't they start their game of murder?" Warren shouted. "They're playing us, that's what they're doing."

"Take it easy, Phil," Masters cautioned. "I'm playing, too, playing for time. Every minute I can steal from those bandits means we're closer to daylight, and with daylight we can hold our own."

"I give you three minutes in which to drop your wheels in token of surrender!" the voice cried into the Eagle's ears.

"Speaking of memory," Masters blasted into the mike, "can you remember a single time the Eagle ever quit?"

"But you are outnumbered," the voice roared.

"Outnumbered, your grandmother!" Masters yelled back. "That flare gave me the tip. You can go chew rugs with your *Fuehrer*, *Herr Kramer*, if you are Kramer."

Masters punched the throttles and sent the B-24 careening through the pre-dawn skies.

"Everybody set!" he called over the inter-com. "We're going to scramble with these Johnnies. Pick your target and give them short bursts."

Warren looked across at the Eagle. "What hit you?" he yelled.

"They're throwing a bluff," Masters said grimly. "Can't be more than three or four ships up here."

"I haven't even seen one of the

crates," Warren growled, as he tried to pierce the shadows.

"But you saw that raider," said Masters as the battle opened up again in earnest. "It's not a carrier, so they must have had to catapult these ships."

One of the unseen ships was trying desperately to draw a bead on the faintly visible flare from the starboard exhaust stacks. Masters eased away from the sputtering stream of tracer and came around in a tight bank as the gunner in the rear opened up.

"One down, sir!" he yelled as a flare of flame mushroomed into the dawn.

Masters straightened out in time to see the flaming debris go plummeting toward the Atlantic.

"Just another example of the teamwork," he said, with a grim smile. "A plane might have a good pilot, an expert navigator, and the best bombardier in the world, but it takes a gunner with a steady hand and good eyes to bring the ship through a swarm of enemy planes."

"You're sort of hipped on this teamwork, aren't you?" Warren said, as he watched the ship smash in.

"Right," Masters said quickly. "The day of the tin god with tinsel wings on his chest is past. Every man, now-days, is as important as the next. One weak—"

Masters' lips firmed in a thin straight line as he caught a plane silhouetted against the band of pink washing the eastern horizon. His foot hit left rudder, dragging the nose of the B-24 across the sky. Up front the man in the gold-fish bowl was letting go with a steady stream of lead.

"That's a Heinkel HE One-fourteen," he muttered, studying the outline of the ship trying to wriggle out of the forward gunner's line of fire. "Pontoon job, as I suspected. Hold it, Baldwin. . . . Steady!"

THERE was no need for the Eagle's admonition. The man up front knew his guns, his nerves were steady even though this was the first time he had come face to face with enemy lead. His tracer caught the nose of the high-wing job and traveled toward the cockpit, catching for a moment on the lower wing stubs.

A trickle of orange flame leaped into life. It flickered, then suddenly grew into an angry, blood-red torch.

"There goes the rear gunner!" Warren shouted.

A panel on the doomed Heinkel opened up and the Nazi jumped from the blazing plane. The pilot tried to follow suit, but tangled in the wing, and the gunner's chute looked like a red blossom in the rosy tint of the new day.

"Must be another one around," Masters said anxiously. "Keep your eyes open everybody!"

"He's right behind us!" the tail gunner called from his cramped turret. "Getting all set to give us a dose. In a pretty red plane. Be a shame to miss it up."

Masters started to weave.

"Shout when you want me to hold steady. Nail him and we can get on with our cruise."

"Yes, sir." The gunner chuckled. "Got myself braced and ready to pour a spoonful of lead down his throat."

Masters grinned at Warren. "That's the spirit that's going to win this war.



First time out, and you'd think he'd been shooting down Huns every morning before breakfast."

Warren was leaning out of the hatch, trying to keep the red crate in view.

"Must be his Nibs," he shouted over his shoulder. "Got his plane so decorated you'd think he was running a bazaar on the side."

"Steady!" the tail gunner's voice blasted into the earphones.

Masters' feet hit the rudder and brought the ship back on a straight course despite the hail of tracer flashing by the window.

Above the roar of the motors he heard the angry chatter of the two 50-caliber guns in the rear turret. Like a giant hornet the B-24 was digging its stinger into the Heinkel.

"I got him—I got him!" the gunner

was yelling. "Boy, am I changing his complexion! Steady just a moment more, sir. Here goes the coup de grâce."

As the clatter of the rear gun opened up in a short steady burst the ship far below them started to despoil the clean morning air with black puffs of smoke where anti-aircraft shells were exploding with a muffled sound. They broke in clusters of three off the starboard wing, hurling screaming chunks of hot steel in all directions. But Masters held steady. For the moment he was simply a cog. The sturdy little gunner in the tail was boss.

"Okay, sir," the gunner called as the guns stopped. "We can get along toward our breakfast."

Masters laid the B-24 over on one wing and then the other.

"Take a good look," he cautioned the crew. "Make sure there's nobody sitting upstairs."

One by one the men reported.

"Sort of figured we had them all."

Masters smiled. "Soon as they started tossing flak at us I had a hunch we were cleaning up on the last of the batch."

Warren glanced down at the surface vessel throwing ack-ack at them from its stern guns.

"Like a hen that's lost her chicks," he said grinning. He glanced at Masters who sat staring toward the new day rushing up out of the east. "You act like you were disappointed because we got that last guy. What's the matter? Figure we're not going to have so much excitement now?"

"I'd like to be sure he was in one of those three planes," Masters said, as he set his course and left the sea raider behind. "Kinda sorry, too, we don't have a load of eggs to lay on that ship."

"Never satisfied, are you?" Warren said, as he began to relax.

MASTERS was about to answer when his phone squealed. He yanked the rubber cushion over his right ear in time to hear that same voice which had taunted him before.

"You have escaped me this time, Masters," came the crisp tones, angry now, and disappointed. "But the

Jackal is waiting for you. And when he sinks his claw into you it will hold. I will return to see your finish."

The phones went dead. Masters shook his head angrily. It had been a long time since he had shot down that Hun he remembered at dawn, a flamer that had fallen into Lake Tana in Ethiopia. Now again he had shot down a Hun, a Nazi who claimed to be that same man, and the hated voice had come back to haunt him. Not only that, but Masters had considered the Jackal amongst the dead too. Yet that gloating voice of Kramer's claimed the Jackal still lived, still waited to tear his flesh with the steel claw he called a hand.

The Eagle shrugged. He was not superstitious, he did not believe in ghosts. But he could not deny the fact that Kramer had been shot down in flames. He had seen him crash. And now, in another dawn, the man's well-remembered voice had come winging out of the skies, when planes had gone down to crash into the waters, flammers every one. Even after that the voice had returned. If things like that could happen, small wonder that planes flying the route of the Ferry Command could disappear between 3XB and 4K.

"John—John!" Warren insisted. "I'm asking you a question."

Masters started from his thoughts of men who seemed to return from the land of the dead.

"What?" he asked petulantly.

"What's the food specialty where we're going?" Warren asked. "What are they apt to dish out?"

Masters thought a moment. A smile flickered across his face.

"Being guests," he said, "we're sure to be served a nice tough rooster stewed in its own blood. Then we'll no doubt have a heaping platter of fricasseed monkey meat, and—"

Warren closed his eyes quickly, sank lower in his seat, and growled. Masters grinned.

"Well you asked me," he said. "But maybe you'd better stick to toast. Eating relatives isn't done in this day and age."

"Shut up," snapped Warren. "I'm going back an' talk to the tail gunner. He's only nasty to Nazis."

CHAPTER III

Ferry Command Station



JOHN MASTERS made a final check with the navigator as he tooled the B-24 over the sprawling mud flats at the mouth of a stream wandering out of French West Africa.

"Three XB is straight ahead now," Masters said

ahead now," Masters said to Warren. He touched the map with his forefinger. "Right there."

Warren continued to scrutinize the ground flashing beneath the wings of the roaring B-24.

"Then what?" he asked.

Masters shrugged. "We land, refuel, then take off as if we were on a regular ferry job."

"That's what you think," Warren snapped. "Don't forget, we're not a couple of Ferry Command pilots trying to deliver a B-twenty-four. That little scramble we got into proves that."

"I've been trying to dope out the connection between this fellow Kramer and these missing planes," Masters said quietly. "Doesn't seem possible he could have anything to do with this. He's sitting out there in the Atlantic, at least a hundred miles from shore."

"You told me about knocking him off once," Warren said, smiling. "Seems as if you failed to do a thorough job. Who's this Jackal guy he was raving about?"

"A chief's disgruntled son," Masters said as he switched to sending. "Threw in with the Huns in the last war thinking he'd gain the place among his people he thought was rightfully his. When I blew up an underground ammunition cache of his I was sure he went with it. I tangled with him and that steel claw of his once, and believe me, Phil, once was enough. You know, he even had that metal claw fixed so he could use his index finger as a pistol!"

The two men sat there, thoughtful. Then Masters' lips moved and his throat mike transmitted the sounds. "Flight Five-six to Three XB. . . Flight Five-six to Three XB. . . Approaching."

A moment's silence, then a voice came into his phones.

"Three to Five-six. Go ahead."

"Flight Five-six east of Three zero J. . . . Three thousand."

"All clear, Five-six, surface variable and gusty, make approach from east."

"Wilco," Masters said as he watched the terrain unroll in front of the B-24.

He held his hand out, palm down. There was a slight jolt as Warren released the landing gear.

"Gear down," Warren said automatically.

Masters glanced over his shoulder. "I got a wheel."

"I got a wheel," Warren echoed.

He glanced at the Eagle's grim face, then centered his attention on the air speed indicator. Masters cut the throttles and the needle was unwinding. It finally reached 130.

"One-thirty," he droned, as a landing strip came into view over the ridge.

Masters nodded, his eyes concentrating on the field as they approached it, then cut along to the south. With his nose down he banked gently and came around at the far end.

Then with the wheel forward, motors throttled to a murmur the B-24 grooved at the airfield. Warren was calling the air speed at five-second intervals. At a signal from the Eagle he made the tank switch.

Masters held off.

The big bomber settled.

The trucks hit the runway.

"Well, here we are," Masters said as he gunned the motors and taxied toward the trees bordering the field.

He followed the faint trace of other tire marks until a man appeared to signal they had reached the end of the first leg of their journey.

"But where," Warren said as he and Masters made their way to the door, "do we go from here?"

"That's what we came to find out," Masters said grimly. "So be normal, will you? Dumb and hungry. But keep your ears open."

AS THEY leaped stiffly to the ground and stretched to ease their tired muscles, a mechanic stepped up.



"Stand back!" the Nazi fanatic snarled (CHAP. V)

"Operations office is over there behind that big baobab tree," he said. "The major will check your papers while we refuel."

"Got a cafeteria around here, Buddy?" Warren asked.

"Mess is just to the right of the sleeping quarters," the mechanic said. "You'll have to hurry. Breakfast is about over."

The mechanic turned to Masters.

"Run into trouble?" he asked, pointing to the smashed cowl window and the bullet holes in the wings.

"Free French plane hopped us along the coast," Masters said quickly. "Didn't seem to get our recognition signal at first."

The mechanic shook his head. "You're the first one that's ever had that trouble," he said. A wry smile twisted his thin features. "I suppose the sergeant had better check your ship before you take off again."

Masters nodded, and turned toward the baobab tree standing like a gnarled sentinel at the edge of the secret field. Warren grinned as they started toward the operations office.

"Just don't trust anybody, do you?" he said.

Suddenly Warren stopped. "Do I smell ham or don't I?"

"Maybe," Masters smiled. "You go ahead and eat. I'll stop in and check with Major MacNeil."

AS WARREN started toward the smell of frying ham Masters grabbed him by the arm.

"Keep the crew busy eating for at least half an hour, will you? I want to talk with the major."

"If they keep up with me they'll be occupied for a couple of hours," Warren said, as he motioned for the others to follow him.

Masters walked slowly toward the Operations office. He pushed open the screen door and entered without knocking.

"I'm first officer of Flight Fifty-six," he said as an officer turned with a startled look from a map of the area hanging on the wall.

"So I see," the major said. "Didn't expect you here so soon. Most of them hit the mess first, then attend to business."

"Business comes first with me," Masters said steadily. "You know my name, of course."

The major hesitated. "You are Lieutenant Johnston, aren't you?" he said glancing at a form on his desk, then raising his eyes to meet the Eagle's.

"Right." Masters smiled as he extended his hand. "And you're Major MacNeil. I'm afraid you'll have to put up with us a little longer than usual. You see we ran into a squall of lead off the coast. Got a few holes that need patching. Want to make sure the fuel lines are okay, too, before we make the next hop."

"A squall of lead?" the major asked. "You mean you were attacked?"

Masters nodded. There was something about the major's eyes he could not quite fathom. They seemed dead, reminding him of a tide-stranded fish's eyes.

"Looked like a Free French job. Somebody overanxious to do his bit and didn't wait to catch our recognition signal."

Major MacNeil nodded absently, as if thinking of something else.

"A plane with Free French markings has been reported in the vicinity," he observed, "but it has never landed. It may have been flown by a German, you know."

"Maybe," Masters said. "Never thought of that." At the same time he thought the major's taking up the subject of Free French planes a bit glib.

"This is your first trip, isn't it?" MacNeil asked.

"My first over this route."

"I hope you will find it interesting," the major said, glancing over his shoulder at the map.

"A lot of stuff comes through this way, doesn't it? I mean big jobs like the one I'm flying." Masters' eyes held the major's.

"This is the sixth B-Twenty-four to check through in a week," the major answered quickly. "Of course there are a lot of two-motored ships going through every morning. Yesterday we had five."

"Any of them report tangling with this plane that jumped us?" Masters asked.

THE major shook his head. He slid a sheaf of reports into a desk drawer as a knock sounded on the door.

"Come in," he ordered listlessly, and the little soft-voiced mechanic who had spoken to Masters entered.

The mechanic saluted, and turned to Masters.

"The sergeant sent me up to report that the repairs to your plane will necessitate a lay-over until evening."

Masters was about to say that he did not believe the damage that serious when the major nodded to the mechanic. The man in the greasy coveralls saluted and stepped outside.

"You would have had to stay over until dark at any event," Major MacNeil said to Masters as the screen door slammed.

"Why?" Masters demanded.

"Orders," the major said. He picked up a typed message from the desk. "Came through last night. All flights between this post and Four K are to be made after dark until further orders."

"How come?" Masters asked as he looked at the slip. "Thought they needed these planes in a hurry. Things are getting pretty thick up on the desert."

"I follow orders, Lieutenant," Major MacNeil said coolly, "and you will have to do the same."

The Eagle was about to ask whose orders, but thought better of it. Instead he shrugged.

"I was just anxious to get this plane through," he said. "My first trip, and I want to deliver it to its destination."

"I am sure you will succeed, Lieutenant Johnston," MacNeil said quietly. "While you have a bite to eat, I'll check your papers and see to the repairs on your plane."

There was a note of dismissal in the major's voice. Masters walked to the door, then paused.

"If that Free French plane flies over I wish you'd call me," he said. "Like to see if it's the same one jumped us."

"I'll do that," the major said without looking up from his papers.

As Masters stepped from the office he bumped into the little mechanic

who came hurrying around the corner.

"More bad news?" Masters asked. "Don't tell me the ship won't fly at all."

"Oh, no, sir." The thin-faced mechanic smiled. "I just wanted the major to sign an order for a new fuel line connection."

"Just a minute," Masters said, barring the man's way. "I hate to be nosey, but is the major ill?"

The mechanic looked up into Masters' clear blue eyes.

"Why do you ask, sir?"

"Acts sort of funny," Masters said. "Sure he hasn't got a touch of fever?"

"Quite sure," replied the mechanic. "He's always that way. But he's a good officer. Keeps things moving."

"How long have you been here?" Masters asked.

"Two weeks, sir," said the mechanic.

"I was ferried over. I'm sort of a trouble shooter. Engines are my specialty. Check them to see they are in order for the flight to the next station. And I hope you won't think I'm bragging when I say every ship passing through here has reached its destination."

"That's nice work," said Masters. "Say, what's your name?"

"Sergeant Haugh," said the mechanic. "Technical sergeant. Only managed to get one set of stripes before I left, so I save those for my Sunday uniform."

Masters smiled as he glanced around the Ferry Command station. "Sunday around here must be like Sunday on a farm."

"I wouldn't know, sir," the sergeant said quietly. "I never worked on a farm."

MASTERS was still smiling as the mechanic hurried into the office. Then he walked slowly toward the mess where he found Warren cleaning up his third plate of ham and eggs.

"Boy!" Warren sighed as Masters sat down beside him. "If these steaks are smoked monkey meat I never tasted better ham, even on the farm."

A wry smile flickered across Masters' face as he helped himself to sugar and cream for his coffee.

"Nice setup they've got here," he observed.

Warren grinned. "I'm all for applying for transfer to the Ferry Command," he said. "They've got a swell battery of refrigerators. How long are we staying?"

"Until dark," Masters said quietly. "Then we take our ship to its destination."

"Where's that?"

"I don't know," the Eagle said. "But I'm finding out."

CHAPTER IV

Queer Birds



IN DARKNESS settled over the jungle fringing the secret field even the atmosphere seemed to be sinister. While the motors of the B-24 warmed up, Masters and Warren stood watching the shadowy figures move around

the plane.

"What's the matter with this outfit, John?" Warren asked.

"You notice anything?"

"Didn't you?" Warren demanded. "They're about as sociable as a flock of AFL and CIO guys at a picnic. Maybe they don't snap at you, but they play awful dumb when you ask a question. That major. Where'd they ever dig him up? Seems to go around dreaming all the time. You ask me, I'd say this whole outfit was queer."

"Thought you were too busy eating to notice it," Masters said quietly.

"I've been keeping my eyes open," Warren retorted. "The way I figure it that little squirt of a mechanic is the only wide-awake guy in the outfit. Comes from Nebraska."

The station medical officer came up before Masters could comment.

"I've got some bad news for you," he said quietly. "Hobson, your navigator, is quite ill. I'm afraid he won't be able to proceed with you."

"What seems to be the trouble?" Masters demanded anxiously. "Stomach upset?"

"Seems to be it," the M.O. said quickly. "Would you care to see him. I wish you would."

Masters glanced at his wrist-watch.

"You wait here, Phil," he ordered, as the M.O. turned to lead the way. "And keep the dew out of your eyes."

In the little hospital Masters found the navigator lying on a cot, weak and pale.

"What's the trouble, Hobson?" Masters asked, as he leaned over the cot.

"I'm sick, sir, very sick," groaned the navigator. "Hit me just a little while ago after I came out of the mess. Must have been that chocolate ice-cream. Felt all right until I ate that. Sorry to fall down on you."

"That's okay, Hobson," Masters said comfortingly. "You did a swell job getting us across the pond. We haven't much farther to go. I'll ask to have you along on the next trip, if that'll make you feel any better."

"Thanks a lot," the navigator said. "But believe me, I'm off chocolate ice-cream from now on."

"See you later then," Masters said quietly as he gave the sick navigator's shoulder a squeeze. "Take good care of him, Doctor."

"I'll do that," the M.O. said quietly as he reached for the navigator's pulse. "Get his stomach cleared out and he'll be all right. The others were."

"Others?" Masters asked quickly.

The M.O. dropped Hobson's wrist as if it were red-hot. He straightened.

"Perhaps my report has not reached—"

"Your plane is ready, Lieutenant," Major MacNeil's voice said at the door.

"I'll be right with you, Major," the Eagle said. "Just came in to see how Hobson was getting on. I'll have to check the map with you, now that we're doing our own navigating."

"I'm sending Sergeant Haugh with you," the major said. "He knows the route quite well."

Masters glanced at Hobson. Then he nodded slowly and turned from the cot.

"I'll be right along, Major," he said. "I'll stop at the mess a moment. I'm a bit thirsty."

"Good," the major replied, as he closed the screen door behind them as if barring any chance of the Eagle's further conversation with the M.O. "I'll check again with the sergeant."

AS THE major started for the Operation's office, John Masters watched him a moment before he turned on his heel and hurried into the mess.

"Gimme a coke, quick," he snapped at the man behind the plank counter.

"Shooting one," the man said. He should have smiled but he didn't. He walked slowly toward the other end of the counter and picked up a glass.

While his back was turned the Eagle leaned across the counter and glanced at the pile of saucers the man had been washing. Some were smeared with strawberry, others with vanilla. And at the edge of the pile rested a single saucer, half filled with melting chocolate ice-cream.

Masters whisked out his handker-

"Chocolate ice-cream," Masters said. "And let that be a lesson to you. You're lucky you're not a navigator. Where's this Sergeant Haugh?"

"Saw him talking to the major a couple of minutes ago," Warren said. "Asked me where you were."

"I was getting myself some chocolate ice-cream," Masters said as he watched two men detach themselves from the shadow of the B-24 and walk toward them.

"You were what?" Warren exclaimed. "Say, I thought everybody here was nuts but you an' me and now I'm beginning to have my doubts about you."

"If that's the worst thing that happens to us on this trip," Masters said grimly, "we're going to be lucky, very



*Follow the Amazing Exploits of John Masters
as He Blazes a Flaming Sky Trail from
Norway to Northern France*

IN

RANGER WINGS

Another Exciting Complete Novel

By LIEUTENANT SCOTT MORGAN

Coming in the Next Issue

chief, reached over and dropped it across the melting ice-cream. He was putting the sodden handkerchief into his pocket when the man returned and set the coke in front of him.

"That's a nickel, sir."

"Here's a quarter—keep the change," Masters said. "Drink the coke, too. They're calling me."

The man dropped the quarter in his pocket and sipped the coke as the Eagle hurried out into the darkness.

"This whole outfit's going nuts," the counterman sighed as he set the glass down. "Including me. . . ."

"What's cooking?" Warren asked as Masters rejoined him.

"Tripe," the Eagle snapped. "Want some?"

"No, thanks," Warren grinned. "Stewed bath towels is one thing I can't go. Say, do you know the little squirt's gonna be our navigator? What hit Hobson?"

lucky, Phil. Shush for a while, will you?"

Warren was silent a moment and commented to Masters:

"This guy Haugh is official exterminator, besides being a lot of other things."

"Meaning what?" Masters asked absent-mindedly.

"Bumped into him over by the huts this evening," Warren said. "Had a pump strapped to his back and a spray nozzle in his hand."

"Mosquitos or tsetse flies I suppose," Masters said as he watched the major approach.

"You all set?" the major asked. "We've cleared you to Four K. You should make it in four hours. You've got a tail wind at six thousand. You've met Sergeant Haugh, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes," Masters said quietly. "Sorry about Hobson, but I'm glad to have you with us, Sergeant."

"Thanks," said the sergeant. "I'm sorry about your navigator, too, but you can rely on me to get you to your destination, sir."

"I'll bet I can," Masters said quietly.

"Better get going, Lieutenant," the major broke in, "so you can be there before dawn."

"Okay, sir," Masters answered. "Take care of Hobson, see that he's shipped back with the next trip."

"I'll do that," the major promised. "Good-by. We'll meet again, I suppose."

"Undoubtedly," Masters said as he took the major's hand. "And soon at that."

THE Eagle walked to the big B-24 where the crew was already crawling on board. Slipping into his seat, Masters waited for the signal that the door was closed.

"Here we go," he said over his shoulder to Warren as the shielded field lights came on. "About the first time I haven't known quite where I was heading."

As Masters gunned the motors and watched the instruments he kept his eyes glued to the quivering needles on the faintly lighted panel. He eased the throttles back.

"Bet you thirty to one if you tried to call Operations you'd find the radio dead," he said grimly.

"Aren't you going to do anything about it?" Warren demanded in alarm.

Masters shook his head. "They're leading. I'll follow for a while and then I'll take over."

"One of these days you'll take over too late and we'll find ourselves being measured for a wooden sweat shirt," Warren growled as Masters started to taxi out on the runway.

The B-24 lumbered to the end of the field and swung around to get into the wind. Sergeant Haugh stuck his head around the shield.

"Here is your course, sir," he said shoving a piece of paper toward the Eagle. "I'll check every fifty miles until we—"

"Get to our destination," Masters said.

"Yes, sir," the sergeant said, holding Masters' eye for a moment.

"Okay, Sergeant, here we go."

Masters reached for the throttles and slowly shoved them forward. The Pratt & Whitney's opened up with their combined 4,800 horses and began to drag the plane across the spot known on Ferry Command maps as 3XB. With a surging roar of power the plane lifted into the air and the field lights blinked out.

"Now to Four K," Warren said as he manipulated the hydraulic retraction gear to bring the wheels up. "Or should I say destination?"

"Destination is the better word," Masters muttered.

He kept climbing in search of the tail wind the major said he would find at the six-thousand foot level.

"I can't help wondering why it's always B-Twenty-fours that fail to reach Four K, Phil," he said to Warren. "The others get through all right."

Warren watched the Eagle for a moment. "You're not nervous, are you? You keep squirming."

Masters smiled. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the handkerchief in which he had pilfered the last few spoonfuls of chocolate ice-cream.

"Been waiting for an opportunity to get rid of this," he said.

Warren's eyes popped open as he saw the stained and soaked wad in the Eagle's hand.

"What in thunder is that?"

"Chocolate ice-cream," Masters said. He held the wet handkerchief to his nose and sniffed.

"Chocolate ice-cream!" Warren exploded. "Now I know you got bit with the same bug that nipped the others. You better let me fly this crate, John. You sit back an' take it easy."

"Got that oiled silk tobacco pouch, Phil?" Masters asked.

Warren hesitated, then pulled out the pouch. Masters emptied out the tobacco despite Warren's frantic protests. Placing the chocolate-stained handkerchief in the pouch he handed it back.

"What am I supposed to do?" Warren yelled. "Get a straw?"

"Put it in your pocket," Masters ordered, "and hang onto it."

WARREN looked at the pouch. "Come on," he begged. "Be

a good sport and let me fly before you get thinking you're captain of a submarine."

"Skip it," Masters cautioned. "Here comes the sergeant."

"And the only guy that isn't goofy," Warren snorted as he shoved the tobacco pouch out of sight.

"Maybe you got something there," Masters said. He was checking his course with the stars. "Even the compass has gone haywire."

"Everything okay, sir?" the sergeant asked over Masters' shoulder.

"Motors are ticking nicely," Masters said without looking up. "Setting the course is up to you."

"You may depend on me, sir," the sergeant said.

"I'm doing that," said Masters. "And by the way, you didn't tell me you were a navigator."

"Oh, I can do a bit of this an' that." The sergeant grinned as Masters looked up at him.

"Suppose you can fly too?"

"Well hardly that," the sergeant said, and went back to his duty.

Warren looked over at Masters. "That guy doesn't talk like a corn husker."

"Never saw a farm," Masters said.

"You think he's mixed up in this phony stuff?" he asked.

"I'm positive," Masters said. "I thought he was okay until I found out he didn't know Sunday on a farm wasn't exactly a holiday. He'll take a little watching."

"And the major?" Warren said. "He's a phony if there ever was one. I've met a lot of dopey majors, but he wins the brass hat."

"Couldn't make him out," Masters said. "He seems a little too dumb to be one of them. When I cracked out to him about a Free French plane hopping us off the coast he fell right in with it. Claimed he'd seen one over the field."

"That proves he's a dope." Warren scowled, as he watched the moon creep over the distant rim of the world. "Why didn't you come right out and say it was a Nazi?"

"And tip them off as to who I was?" Masters growled. "I had to take the chance that two different outfits were working."

"Swell chance," Warren protested. "Bet the major got word an hour before we landed. Knew who you were all the time."

"Maybe," Masters said. "He knew I was lying and did a little on his own to see my reaction. If you want my opinion the skids have been well greased for the Ferry Command. Hobson isn't the first navigator who's been taken sick."

Warren felt of the pocket in which he had put the pouch.

"You mean that's part of the scheme?"

Masters nodded, then his eyes became slits as he stared toward the east where the moon was creeping over the horizon.

"Now what?" Warren demanded.

"I'll swear I saw a plane," Masters said. He glanced quickly over his shoulder at the sergeant. "Look! There it is again—centered right in the moon."

"A Hurricane," Warren said slowly. "So what? We're not the only ship in the air over Africa. Flyin' right in the moon that way shows he's friendly anyway."

The plane came at them with a rush, swept over them, then half rolled somewhere above and behind them. A parachute flare burst into being and floated just above and a little ahead of their course.

"Those things again," Warren said, and cursed.

A split second later a scintillating burst of machine-gun fire skittered across their course. And, following the tracer, came the Hurricane.

"Look at those markings!" Warren exploded. "It's a Free French job!" His eyes were wide with perplexity.

MASTERS shook his head grimly. He had only mentioned a Free French plane as a ruse to throw this unknown enemy off the track. Yet here was a plane carrying the markings of the Free French, throwing lead across his nose.

"The pilot's waving to us!" Warren yelled as the Hurricane cut through the cone of light made by the drifting flare. "He's motioning for us to land."

"We didn't fall for that landing gag

this morning," Masters snarled. "We're not doing it tonight."

The Hurricane wheeled in front of them, threw a quick burst that almost blistered the port wing of the B-24 and disappeared into the darkness, leaving Masters and Warren to figure out this new angle.

"Was that a Focke Wolf?" the sergeant asked, just a little too casually to suit the Eagle.

"No, Sergeant." Masters grinned. "It was a Hurricane. A Free French job."

"Free—"

The sergeant's eyes popped wide as the Hurricane dropped another flare, then swooped in alongside of the Consolidated. Then, as if putting on an act under a spotlight, the pilot went into a series of three slow rolls, followed by a tight half-roll.

Both Masters and Warren started in astonishment. They knew that maneuver. An old ally had used that many times to identify himself in the air, a pilot who even as a boy in the First World War had helped them in their fight against the common enemy.

"It's Pierre!" Masters shouted.

"Good old Pierre," Warren said gleefully. "Might know he'd be down here helping de Gaulle."

"And who is this Pierre?" the sergeant demanded coldly.

Masters looked over his shoulder. His eyes narrowed as he held those of the sergeant.

"He's a Frenchman who doesn't know the word quit, Sergeant. Some day he'll be moving back to Paris—after he's helped drive the rats into the sewers where they belong."

"Oh, I see," the sergeant said quietly. "I thought perhaps this was the plane you said had tried to shoot you down this morning."

Masters started to answer, but his words were lost in the frantic clatter of machine-guns. Tracer streaked out of the night, grasping at the wing of the Hurricane with tentacles of flame.

"That must be the man I spoke of this morning," Masters said steadily. "One of Hitler's *heiling* heels."

The sergeant hurriedly disappeared toward the rear of the B-24, as the Hurricane and the Focke-Wulf 190

disappeared in the night.

Warren grinned wryly as he listened to the clatter of guns.

"This is some trip, John. Everything is happening. I go fishing, I hook a big one, and what happens? I find myself over Africa in about as screwy a mess as we've ever been in. Kinda like the thrillers. . . . You know the gag, 'Continued in our next!'"

CHAPTER V

Winged Triangle



THE Eagle was puzzled as he strove to weave his way between the two roaring pursuit jobs. It was about as strange a battle as he had ever taken part in, a weird triangle of death high over the fringe of the desert. A French plane flown, he was certain, by Pierre Viaud, one of the staunchest allies he had ever known.

On the other hand was one of the speedy little Focke-Wulf 190s, but who was flying that the Eagle did not know. And there he was, six thousand feet over Africa, not avoiding the tracer thrown at him by a Nazi crate, but death-dealing slugs from the guns of the man he had known as a true Frenchman and ally.

That was the mystery. The pilot of the Hurricane seemed intent on driving him down, while the Nazi seemed equally anxious that the B-24 continue its flight.

A withering burst of fire streaked across the right-hand wing of the Consolidated. With a roar the Hurricane zoomed over them and curled in a half-roll, with the Focke-Wulf traveling at breakneck speed close in its slip-stream.

"This is screwy," Warren shouted as the Hurricane rolled away from a scintillating burst and disappeared behind them. "I'd bet my life that's Pierre! Yet he's trying his darnedest to knock us out of the air."

Masters nodded grimly. Behind him he heard a new note, the staccato chatter of the guns in the tail position. Once, twice they let go. Then they were silent.

"Pilot to rear gunner—Pilot to rear gunner," he called. "You okay?"

His answer was another burst, followed by a chorus of machine-guns as the Hurricane and Focke-Wulf tangled again.

"Pilot to rear gunner—pilot to rear gunner," Masters cried sharply. "Hold your fire! Hold your fire until we find out what this is all about."

The gun stopped, but there was no answer over the interphone.

Masters' knuckles were white on the wheel. Warren was leaning out of the panel, trying to locate the two mysterious planes. Masters moved the throttles ahead a notch or two. Under the surging power of the four motors the B-24 leaped ahead and started to climb as the Eagle eased the wheel back.

The moon gleamed on the slanted wings of the Hurricane as it went into a split-S turn in front of them. It wheeled, came at them with sparkling tracer that tried to rival the moon. Smoke-trailing lead hissed over the Eagle's ship as he banked to get away.

Masters turned from his course as the FW barged by with guns spewing lead at the Hurricane.

Then the guns in the tail started in again.

"Hope he knocks 'em both down," Warren growled. "This is spreading it on too thick."

Masters tried again to contact the rear gunner but without success.

"Wish that guy'd quit shooting until he knows what he's popping at," Masters exclaimed.

As the two planes went by like blurred shadows, Masters sat tensed, every nerve on the alert, waiting for the Hurricane to come around. It was beyond his comprehension. By all rights the Hurricane should be standing between them and the Nazi. But it was the other way around.

"Why don't you try to contact him?" Warren said, as the Focke-Wulf forced the Hurricane away.

Masters smiled grimly. "Remember what I told you? Our radio's dead as a mackerel. Nazis don't miss many angles."

WHILE Masters fought to avoid the repeated thrusts of the Hurricane, Warren tried to raise some-

body. He finally gave up in disgust. "Can't even get static. Look out! Here he comes again."

The Eagle kicked rudder and skidded around in a wild turn. The Hurricane slashed the air to shreds as it passed over the wing of the B-24.

The tail gunner opened up again.

"See who he's shooting at," Masters yelled as he straightened out, hoping to gain another mile or two on his course.

"Who'd you think?" Warren retorted as he stuck his head out of the open panel.

Masters waited tensely as Warren relaxed beside him again.

"Not popping now, but the other two are having a row back there. Tracer's thick as fleas on a hound dog's ears. Say, have you noticed that Pierre, if it is Pierre, always throws his stuff along our wings?"

Before the Eagle could speak the two ships were roaring in front of him again. He watched them anxiously. They were equally matched, both splendid flyers and both equally determined to gain their objective.

"See the sergeant back there?" Masters asked. "Should get a check on our course."

Warren glanced behind the shield and shook his head.

Suddenly the rear guns opened up, held steady for a minute, then stuttered into silence. And as the guns died away the only sound to be heard was the thrash of the props and the steady throb of motors.

"Now what?" Warren exclaimed. He stuck his head out, but in a moment had it back. "John!" he cried. "The Hurricane's gone! Look! There's the Hundred and Ninety pulling up alongside us!"

Masters saw the dim silhouette of the F.W. slipping into position above and a little to the left of them, and he was wondering what the next move in the grim game would be. The Focke-Wulf moved closer. With one fist on the wheel and the other on the throttles, Masters watched it.

"Keep your eyes peeled for the Hurricane!" he called to Warren. "From the way this bird's acting that crate has gone. Can't take any chances though."

Warren was about to turn when he grabbed at the Eagle's arm and pointed toward the Nazi job.

"Look!"

A green light was flashing from the side of the Focke-Wulf as Masters wheeled. It was a small brilliant light that gleamed like a ghostly spark on the side of the fuselage. It flickered on and off.

"Code!" Masters exclaimed. "Missed part of it. Count those dots and dashes, then check."

Masters caught two dots and a dash. Then a pause before a dash, a dot, and a dash winked from the side of the plane.

"U K," he murmured. "Doesn't make much sense does it? U-K . . . Hey, I got it now. We missed the first part and only caught the end. The two dots and a dash were the end of the Morse for four. See it? Four K."

"You mean Four K is around here somewhere?" Warren demanded. "How come they let us through."

"I'll wager Four K is miles from here," Masters said grimly. "That bird is using that symbol as a signal."



But I'll guarantee we're close to the destination these rats have picked out for us."

"Never wanted to keep from getting anywhere so bad in my life," Warren growled. "We're—"

WARREN'S words were sliced short by a quick blast from the rear guns. Almost before the sound had died away Masters was out of his seat.

"Take over!" he shouted to Warren as he made a dash for the rear of the B-24. "I've been suspicious of that gun."

Hurriedly Masters made his way back into the fuselage of the big bomber.

"Where's Sergeant Haugh?" he demanded of the first gunner he met.

The man jerked his head toward the tail. "Back there. Said Tompkins had been drilled."

"Was he handling the guns?"

"Guess so," shouted the gunner. "Pretty good shot. Knocked down that Hurricane. Say, this was a dizzy war! Hurricanes tryin' to pop us and Nazis saving our hide."

The Eagle did not stop to listen. He made his way quickly but cautiously toward the rear of the tapered fuselage, and then stopped dead in his tracks. There, standing over a tank strapped to the metal wall of the B-24, was Sergeant Haugh. At least he guessed it was the sergeant, for the man had a weirdly mottled green mask covering his features.

Masters' eyes traveled from the mask to the tank. To all appearances it was a regulation oxygen tank, except that attached to it was a set of shoulder webbing and a long tube with a spray nozzle at the end. The sergeant's hand was hovering over the valve.

"What are you doing?" Masters demanded.

Startled, Sergeant Haugh jerked erect. A Luger was clenched in his right fist. With his left hand he pulled the mask to one side.

"Stand back!" he snarled. His eyes had suddenly become hard, ruthless, as only a Nazi fanatic's can be. "You have walked into a trap, Masters. In a few moments you will be in the hands of the Jackal. We have promised him the privilege of tearing your heart out with that steel fist of his."

"You and Kramer?" Masters demanded.

He was more interested in the hand on the tank valve than he was in the one that held the gun.

A slow smile crept over the Nazi's face. It was not a pleasant smile. His left hand was moving. The valve on the oxygen tank was slowly opening. Masters' keen ears had already picked up the sharp hiss, and he knew it was not oxygen.

"Put out that cigarette!" he cried, lifting his eyes from the tank valve and looking over the Hun's shoulder. "Can't you see he's letting oxygen escape."

The Hun tensed. His fist poised over the valve as he glanced quickly over his shoulder. But there was no one there.

CHAPTER VI

Saboteur

IN THE split second in which the Nazi's attention was directed over his shoulder, Masters went into action like a cyclone gone berserk. His lithe body arched through the air, his outstretched arms grasping for the Nazi.

As he crashed into the surprised sergeant he heard the gun roar. The bullet smashed over his shoulder and struck with a thud. From the sound, Masters knew the slug had met flesh instead of metal, but there was no time to see who had walked into the path of that murderous bullet. His attention was occupied wholly with overcoming the Nazi.

Masters' steely arms swarmed over the sergeant, his fingers searching for a hold on the man's wrist as the two fell to the floor.

"You filthy saboteur!" Masters gasped as they rolled and thrashed on the floor. "I'll tear you apart—you, Kramer, and the Jackal!"

The sergeant knew that this was a fight to the death. He had been warned about the Eagle. And with victory almost within his grasp he was determined to snatch at it, and in so doing bring down the hated American Eagle.

As they rolled to the side of the B-24, with Masters fighting desperately to prevent the Hun bringing the gun into play, the sergeant began to thrash his feet over the wall of the fuselage. For the moment Masters did not see his purpose, but as the door crashed open, he knew the man had been successful in unhooking the door latches.

A gust of cold night air poured in as the struggling men slipped closer to the open door. Death was reaching through that door for the Eagle as it had done so many times in the past.

Inch by inch, the Eagle and the Hun slipped closer and closer to the yawning doorway. Once over that metal sill the next stop would be the hard floor of the desert ten thousand feet below. Once the sergeant managed to pull the Eagle's body over that low sill the career of the man the Nazis

feared and hated would be ended. For Masters had no chute; the Hun did.

"Bank to the right!" Masters prayed silently. "Bank to the right, Phil."

"You are finished now, Masters," the sergeant gloated as he managed to brace himself and gain the leverage of his legs.

Half out of the plane he pulled and tugged to wrench the Eagle away from his precarious foothold. "You will smash to a pulp on the desert below, and I will report to my *Fuehrer* that I have rid him of the cursed Eagle."

Masters' answer was a quick drive with his left while he still clung frantically to the hand clutching the Luger.

The Hun winced with pain, but he clung to the Eagle, slowly inching him over the sill. Just six inches more and gravity would become an ally of the Nazi. All that lay between the Eagle and a horrible death was a knee jammed behind the metal door frame.

Masters was not afraid of death. He had faced it many times. He knew that some day he would come face to face with the Grim Reaper for the last time. But here was more than a single life at stake, or a dozen lives. The gamble was for the life of the Ferrying Command, that star-studded skyway to the East over which flew much-needed planes and supplies.

A few planes less and the Suez Canal might be lost. A few planes might mean the loss of Egypt, or the Caucasus, even the loss of freedom for the world.

The mere thought of what depended on him at that moment sent a current of renewed energy flowing through the weary Eagle's veins. His fist closed tighter on the sergeant's wrist, slowly bending it back. The Nazi tried to fight him off by slashing at his face.

SUDDENLY the Eagle seemed to tire. His hand relaxed its steady pressure. A smile of triumph gleamed on the Nazi's sweating face as he sensed victory.

Then in one swift second the smile changed to horror as Masters' wrist snapped forward like a steel spring. The sergeant's hand, partly relaxed, was suddenly forced upward, bringing

the muzzle of the Luger against his cheek. He tried to jerk it away, but Masters was ready for the move, jamming forward suddenly against the heel of the gun.

There was a dull roar, a scream of pain from a bullet-shattered face as the Nazi relaxed his hold and fell away into the night.

Masters slumped forward and for a moment lay breathing the cold night air into his tortured lungs. The air pouring past the open hatch seemed to be filled with demons, screaming in frustration over once again losing their grip on the Eagle.

Then Masters slowly pushed himself to his knees and crawled away from the door. Steadying himself, he reached for the valve of the oxygen tank and turned it.

"Propanesia," he choked, pushing the nozzle toward the open door. "The rat! They would think he was valving oxygen, but he would have been filling the fuselage with this stuff, putting them completely under his power. Spoiled his own racket when he managed to unlatch that door."

Getting to his feet, Masters glanced toward the entrance to the rear compartment and saw the body of the gunner he had spoken to a moment or so before—or was it a century. He saw the hole in the man's neck and knew that another American had met his death at the hands of a treacherous enemy.

Masters hurried back to the tail gunner's position. By the light of the moon he saw why that tail gun had joined in the fight against his orders. Tompkins lay huddled in a pool of blood.

Masters bent over the man just to make certain, then straightened.

"They'll pay, Tompkins," he promised. "You might have expected to get yours in a fair fight. You didn't know they'd hide behind the uniform you wore and shoot you down in cold blood."

He felt the B-24 tilt as Warren waggled the wings. He turned and slowly made his way toward the control cabin.

"What's up, Phil?" he asked as he dropped into his seat.

"Holy mackerel!" Warren ex-

claimed. "You look like you've just bumped up against a couple of ghosts armed with buzz-saws."

"The sergeant was one of them," Masters said, icily cold. "Murdered two swell men back there, fellows who were part of the team. The swine! I'll make them pay. Why can't they fight fair, Phil? Nazis—they're like mad dogs. They've got to be exterminated, and I'm starting that little job tonight."

"I think we're about at our destination, John," Warren said quietly, and pointed toward pin-points of light forming a T ahead of them on the desert.

Masters nodded. "Couple of dogs down there I want to meet," he said. "When I'm through, the Ferrying Command lads are going to have clear skies."

Warren shook his head. "I'd still rather be tied onto a marlin. But if you're going to pay these devils a visit, I'm with you, John."

"Thanks, Phil," Masters said as he reached for the throttles. "We owe them for Pierre, too."

THE Focke-Wulf had disappeared somewhere in the starlit night. The only sign of life was the flickering landing T far ahead of them on the desert.

Masters' lips were firmed in a straight, taut line as he studied the map. He shook his head slowly and handed it to Warren.

"Gummed up the compass as I suspected and gave us positions," he said.

"How about these others?" Warren asked. "Sure they're not in on this? I mean the guy up front and the remaining gunner."

"The Nazis needed only one man," Masters said. "So I suppose these other men are okay. But I'll have a talk with them."

He began to speak over the interphone.

"Pilot to all positions. Please meet me at the entrance to control cabin. Right away, please."

"Wilco," the two men answered.

Masters slipped from his seat and stood behind the shield waiting for the man to come up from the nose. The gunner who had been in the astral

globe crawled down and stood beside him.

"What happened, sir?" he asked, motioning to the body near the rear of the fuselage.

"Sergeant Haugh killed him," Masters said, as the bombardier joined them.

"Sergeant Haugh!" the bombardier snapped. "Took Hobson's place, didn't he?"

Masters nodded. "It was all a part of a plan, men. Haugh was a Nazi agent. They've been gumming up the works for the Ferrying Command for the past week or so. B-Twenty-fours have been taking off from Three XB and disappearing over the desert. Don't imagine you've guessed it, but I'm the fellow they call the Eagle."

"You mean we're on a special mission to plug this leak in the command?" the bombardier said in astonishment.

"Right." Masters smiled. "In a few minutes this B-Twenty-four is scheduled to do a bird-cage act. I'm offering you a chance—not much of a one at that—to bale out before we run up against the men at the head of this scheme."

A slow smile spread over the gunner's face. "I was listening while you talked to the co-pilot—it was coming over the inter-phone. Remember when you were talking about this business being a matter of team-work? Well, I'm still on that team if you want me."

"And try an' bench me." The bombardier scowled. "I thought something was screwy about that place back there." He nodded toward the west. "Everybody seemed dead from the chin up. You call the plays, sir, and we'll run interference."

"Good." Masters smiled. "But I want to warn you—this isn't going to be easy. The odds are going to be against us."

"But we stand a good chance of clearing the way for the fellows who'll come after us, don't we?" the bombardier asked.

"That's the big thing," Masters said. "Co-pilot wants you," the gunner warned.

Masters leaned into the cockpit. "What's up, Phil?"

"That light," Warren said, pointing

to a light to the south of the landing T which was almost under them now. "Think it's our friend in the FW?"

MASTERS studied the light and shook his head.

"That's a beacon of some sort. Must be some cliffs around here. Pass over the T, then turn left and throttle down. If anybody blinks at you, flash them a Four K. Got to take a chance that's the right one. By that time I ought to be ready to take over."

"Okay, Mister," Warren said grimly.

"You look worried, Phil," Masters said, putting a hand on his friend's shoulder. "Snap out of it."

"I'm not worried about them," Warren growled. "But I got a hunch I'm going to miss a couple of meals. I'm so hungry now I could eat some of that chicken stewed in its own blood."

Masters laughed and slapped Warren's shoulder.

"I'll be seeing you."

Then he stepped back to the others.

"The second half of this game's about ready to start," he said quietly as he glanced at the dead gunner in the corner. "It's going to be tough, so how about making sure we have a little reserve power for the last play? You fellows go back and get Tompkins, and I'll take care of Lewis."

CHAPTER VII

The Jackal's Lair



PLAINLY the men were a little puzzled, but they followed the Eagle's orders. In a few moments both dead men lay on the floor just behind the control cabin partition.

"You fellows wait here," Masters ordered.

"The minute we land we'll go into action."

Leaving them, Masters went forward and dropped into his seat again.

"I'll take over now, Phil."

Warren nodded as he lifted his hands from the wheel.

"They just cracked a blinker down there. I gave them a Four K with our landing light. Seemed to be satisfied."

"Good," Masters said.

His right fist reached for the throttles. The four faded to a dull throb. The needles on the air speed and altimeter began to unwind. With his nose down he banked and came at the landing T. Then to the right he soon caught a saw-tooth horizon mounting high against the heavens.

"Cliffs." He nodded. "Beginning to get an idea of where we are."

"Hey!" Warren cautioned. "You're going to overshoot this lot."

"I know it," Masters said as he leaned out the window and studied the terrain by the light of the moon. "Want to see how big a place they've got. Didn't think I was going to set down right on their door mat, did you?"

"Bet it'll have a welcome sign on it." Warren smiled weakly.

"In caps, too," Masters answered. He moved the throttles forward and circled the field while Warren lowered the landing gear. "Here we go, big boy."

The B-24 leveled off. The moonlit desert came up at them again and reached for the wheels. With a rumble the ship set down and came to a stop as Masters braked it quite a distance from the landing T which had blinked off the minute they landed.

"Quick!" Masters called over his shoulder. "Bring Tompkins in here."

"Well, I'll be—" Warren said under his breath as he watched Masters prop the dead gunner in the pilot's seat.

"Now Lewis over there," commanded the Eagle. "He's shot in the right side of the neck. It'll look as if a slug came through the open window."

"What's the idea?" Warren demanded.

"Just giving them something to wonder about while we have a look-see," said Masters. "Get some sand and throw it on those blood smears."

Warren shook his head and helped carry sand to the door and handed it into the Eagle who spread it on the pools of blood.

"Won't fool the big boys," he said, as he leaped to the ground. "But I've got a hunch there'll be a few minutes lost before they get the angle straight. You fellows got guns? Okay! Let's get going."

Leaving the B-24 to look like the shadow of some prehistoric pachyderm just emerging from the desert sands the four men hurried off, making certain that they kept the plane between themselves and the cliffs.

NOW what?" Warren asked as Masters stopped in the shadow of a cluster of needlelike rocks towering like sentinels over the desert field.

"You eat," Masters said dropping to the ground between the rocks. "While you fill your empty carcass we'll keep an eye open for visitors."

"But what do we eat—sand fleas?"

"Iron rations," Masters said. He opened a Ration K dinner unit. "One of these for each. Saw them in the locker, so I brought them along. Plenty of calories to keep us going."

"Thunder with calories," Warren retorted. "What's in 'em? Looks like a square meal for a convalescent canary."

"Can of pork, tube of concentrated bouillon, hard biscuits, graham crackers, dextrose tablets and some chewing gum. Sorry about the bouillon extract. No water, but you might try smearing a little bit on your biscuit."

"Somebody's fooling around the plane," the bombardier said, after a moment. "See the light flashing in the cockpit?"

"They've got pretty near half a mile's run back to the cliffs," Masters said, as he spread a gob of the pork meat on a cracker. "Then somebody else will have to come out for a look, and before they discover it's not all as mysterious as it looks we'll be having a look around those cliffs on our own."

The men ate in silence, then prepared to move on under the Eagle's direction.

"Have enough, Phil?" Masters asked as they worked their way cautiously among the rocks.

"That stuff fooled me," Warren said. "Feel like I'd had a shore dinner."

"If you begin to feel faint, let me know," Masters said. "I've got a cake of Ration D here. Next time I bring you along I'll fetch a hamper of lunch."

"The next time you bring me I'll stay home," Warren growled. "I got a

yen to be a homebody from now on. A pipe, a good book and a kettle of pot liquor bubblin' on the stove. Boy, that would be heaven!"

"Keep your mouth shut or you'll be in heaven before you know it," Masters cautioned, as they skirted the eastern border of the plateau.

A night wind was beginning to sweep across the desert, driving stinging particles of sand before it.

"That'll cover our tracks," Masters said softly, when they paused for a rest.

"How long's this hike going to be?" Warren asked.

Masters nodded toward the cliffs. "Headquarters to this outfit must be at the base. Most of these African cliffs are full of caves. A natural for a secret airfield. These night winds help to obliterate wheel tracks, too." He motioned the bombardier and gunner closer. "From now on you two keep about fifty yards to the rear. If we get stopped I'll say 'Oh-oh!' loud enough for you to hear. If that happens, you do a quick fade away. If you get stopped you give us the signal and we'll drop. That'll leave at least a pair of us to carry on. Get the idea?"

"Yes, sir," the two men answered softly. "You can depend on us."

"Then let's travel. If I want you to close in I'll toss a rock your way."

Masters and Warren moved on with their two companions following at the prescribed distance.

WHEN they reached the shallow belt of the cliffs Masters stopped. He listened for a moment, then whispered to Warren:

"I don't like it. Things are too quiet."

"Hadn't we better eat that D Ration?" Warren murmured. "Supplying the enemy with food is sabotage, you know."

"Forget that and keep your hand near your gun," Masters growled. "You may need it any minute now."

"Not any more I don't," Warren choked.

"Why?" Masters snapped.

"I got one stuck in my back now," Warren said weakly. "Oh-oh!" His voice was loud now. It sounded panicky but it wasn't. "Don't let that

thing go off. My spine's ticklish."

"Silence!" a voice snarled from the shadows. "Put your hands up and turn slowly."

They turned and found themselves facing three shadowy figures. By the glow of a flashlight playing over them they could see the gleam of rifle barrels.

"Oh-oh!" Masters repeated the warning. "Guess they've got us, Phil."

"You're telling me," Warren growled.

"Silence!" snarled a voice thick with the accent of a Nazi.

"A little more courtesy, my friend or I will report you to Kramer," Masters said fearlessly.

"Any reporting you do will be to the one who calls himself the Jackal," the German said harshly.

"That would be a pleasure," Masters answered dryly. "I have come a long way to meet him. And may I add, Jackals are fit allies for Nazis."

"If you know what is good for you you will be silent!" barked the Hun. "*Vorwärts!* Keep your hands high or we will shoot."

"The Jackal would not like that," Masters said significantly. "He has promised to take care of my finish personally."

"Bah!" sneered the Hun. "You will be his tool like the others."

"The others?" Masters asked. "You mean there are other Americans?"

"There are many others," the German snarled. "Other Americans as stupid as yourself."

"If they are," Warren said, with a grin, "this war's soon going to be over, because this guy's awful stupid, Fritz, awful stupid. He's so stupid he's always getting himself tangled in trouble."

The German swore and prodded them along a narrow path leading to the base of the cliff. Then at last they paused before the dim outline of a door.

"The entrance to the Jackal's lair," Masters said grimly as the door slowly swung open.

"*Vorwärts!*" the Nazi commanded. Then the door closed behind him.

After a walk along a rocky corridor Masters and Warren found themselves being pushed through another

door. It closed behind them without a sound. At first they could see nothing. Then at one end of the room a green light began to flicker and grow stronger, casting a weird glare over the room.

"Good evening, Mr. Masters," a voice with a metallic rasp said from the far end of the rock-walled room. "Will you step closer, please?"

"Come on, Phil," Masters said, out of the corner of his mouth. "Here's the reception committee."

AS THEY moved forward the light grew stronger, revealing a masked figure seated behind a hand-carved table. The face of the figure was covered with a queer mottled mask through which a pair of mad, sinister eyes gleamed.

Then Masters stopped. His eyes narrowed as they dropped to the figure's hands resting on the polished surface of the table. One hand was flesh and bone, the other a thing of gleaming metal, glistening in the eerie glow of the green light.

"Look at that hand!" Warren exclaimed as he watched the fingers clench and then relax. "Is that the claw you told me about?"

"You recognize this?" the figure behind the table said in a raspy voice as he lifted his hand and worked the fingers slowly.

Masters shook his head.

"You lie!" the voice behind the mask squeaked. "You saw it some years ago. You escaped my shiny talons then. But this time they will tear your heart out! Do not pretend you have forgotten the Jackal."

"I haven't," Masters smiled grimly. "But you're not the Jackal. You're a slimy impostor and I suspect this Hun who claims to be Kramer is, too. The real Jackal, and the real Kramer died a long time ago right here in Africa. You may be fooling some of the natives, but not me."

"Why?" The man's tone sharpened. Some of the rasp had disappeared.

"Well," Masters said slowly, "in the first place that hand is a pretty poor imitation. The real Jackal was clever. The bit of mechanism he contrived to take the place of the hand he'd lost was little short of miraculous. Let's

see you shoot with that index finger."

"Shoot?" the voice behind the mask said in almost normal tones.

"Yes, shoot," Masters retorted. "You must have heard about that hand, but you never saw it. You didn't know its real secret. The Jackal's index finger was really a pistol. But the end of yours is solid."

"You are telling an untruth, Masters," the man snarled.

Masters shrugged and laughed. "You're trying to live a lie, but making a dismal failure. You're no more the Jackal than I am. You're a Nazi trying to masquerade as the Jackal. Your skin isn't even dark. That stain isn't fooling me. And as for your voice—that's a dud, too. You tried to squeak, in a poor imitation of the man who had lost most of his face through blood poisoning and had to use an electrical gadget and a diaphragm when he wished to speak, but—"

"You are clever, are you not?" the voice behind the mask said.

"Hey," Warren whispered. "That's the voice we heard along the coast! Remember?"

CHAPTER VIII

Trapped



NOW that the voice coming from behind the mask was normal the Eagle recognized it. But strangely enough it was the voice of the man Kramer he had shot down one dawn over Lake Tana.

"Go on please, Masters," said the masked man. "You seem puzzled. If I am not the Jackal, who am I?"

"Just another phony," the Eagle sneered. "Why don't you take off that thing you're pretending is a metal hand, and that mask. Take them both off and we'll see another rat from the *Fuehrer's* litter. As I said, you may have managed to make some of the natives believe you're the reincarnation of the Jackal, but not me."

"Very well, Masters." The man laughed, a hard cruel laugh. "I suppose I expected too much when I thought you might have forgot some of the details."

He tore the gleaming metal thing from his hand and dropped it on the table. Then the weirdly mottled mask lay beside it. The light shone full on the man's face as he looked up at Masters.

The Eagle choked back a gasp of astonishment. For the man sitting before him not only had the voice of a man he had killed in a fair fight years before, but the face. This time it was no mask.

"Kramer!" Masters said softly, as he studied the face and piercing eyes of the man sitting there laughing at him.

"What is the matter, Masters?" the Nazi sneered. "You seemed surprised."

That he had a battle before him, Masters fully realized. Every second he stood before the Nazi was fraught with danger, not only to himself and his companions, but to the cause of world freedom.

"You are not the Kramer who died in Ethiopia," he said slowly. "You're his son. You called yourself *Doktor von Kramer* back in Germany, before Hitler began to reach out with his blood fingers."

"You fail to mention that I am the world's greatest authority on mental therapeutics, Masters," Kramer said, and smiled. "Or that I was known internationally as a sportsman pilot."

"Did I have to?" Masters growled. "Is your ego that bad? For a minute I was puzzled, but only because you'd clipped off that goatee you affected. I saw you a couple of times while you visited mental institutions, in the States. I was working with the F. B. I. then. I might add that they were not being fooled. They knew you were over there transmitting Hitler's orders to the foul nests called bunds."

"But you hardly expected to find me here, did you?" The German grinned. "Here in Africa avenging my father whom you murdered. You never dreamed that I knew about the Jackal, did you? Or suspected that the son of Kramer might return one day to carry on where he left off?"

"A Hun could do nothing which would surprise me," Masters snarled. "Although I'll admit using propanesia is about the lowest method of waging a war one could think of."

"You know about propanesia also?" Kramer said in amazement.

"Didn't think you Nazis had a monopoly on the gas, did you?" Masters drawled. "Only back home they're using it for more humanitarian purposes—for mental therapeutics for instance, especially in amnesia cases. But you, a typical Nazi, have reversed things and turned a useful thing into something foul." He was still smiling at the loathsome Nazi. "I suppose you are taking advantage of the superstitious natives."

"They will be ready to follow when I send you and your breed to bomb the canal," Kramer promised ominously.

"What do you mean by that?" Masters demanded.

"Just this," Kramer rasped, leaning toward the Eagle. "I have chosen you to lead my little *Staffel* over the Suez Canal."

Masters nodded. "You think because you're using propanesia to dull the minds of these men that they can be ordered to fly over any objective you choose and bomb it?"

A SINISTER smile touched Kramer's face.

"You claim you know what effect propanesia has on the human brain. Can you give me a single reason why my plan will not work? You realize, I suppose, that the crews of the other lost planes are my prisoners, getting one dose of my gas a day, more than enough to keep their wills in tune with mine. Come, give me one reason—just one."

"Okay," Masters said fearlessly. "I'm that reason. But let's change the subject a moment. This bombing of the Suez. Don't you know the canal hasn't any locks?"

Kramer shrugged. "But convoys travel through it, and we know when they sail. Tomorrow night ships loaded with ammunition will pass through. Or should I say attempt to? In that narrow ditch you men can hardly fail against ships traveling at five miles an hour. The three ships at the head of the convoy and the three at the end will be sunk and the canal closed to further travel for British and American convoys. In the meantime General Rommel will be driving

toward Alexandria, almost within his grasp now. You begin to see the picture, I hope."

"If you're speaking of a movie, I do," Masters smiled. "You've got the wrong ending for your little script. Rommel's never going to see Alexandria and ships are going to keep right on sailing through the canal."

"You doubt I will succeed?"

"Yes," Masters said with flat finality.

"But you know what I have accomplished, Masters," the Nazi blurted.

"Sure," Masters said. He was keeping his eyes on a tiny ray of light being reflected from one of the knuckles of the metal glove. "You managed to get an agent planted at Three XB. It must not have been difficult for him to get you in at the depot so you could gas the men stationed there, including Major MacNeil, so they'd obey your orders. Then when a B-Twenty-four came along, your agent, who in this case was Haugh, could slip one of the crew something to make him ill and take his place. A tank of propanesia instead of oxygen at the right moment and the crew passed out. Your agent took over and landed the ship here. I suppose you only took B-Twenty-fours because they carry a bigger bomb load."

Kramer nodded. "You are clever, Masters . . . But tell me—what happened to Haugh?"

"He's hyena fodder by now," Masters smiled. "Bet there's a lot of sick hyenas out there tonight. Isn't a hyena living that could stomach a Nazi."

Kramer glared at the Eagle.

"You are bluffing, Masters. You are afraid you will fall under my power!"

"No," Masters' eyes narrowed as they held the ray of light scintillating on the knuckle of the metal glove. "I was just thinking of how busy you must have been shutting back and forth between that vessel lying off the coast and here. You stayed on the ship and let the others take the rap. Took a lot of fuel, didn't it?"

"I could always refuel at Three XB," Kramer said. "My only trouble was that Hurricane with the Fighting French markings. However, I think we disposed of it for good tonight.

Strange, don't you think, that its pilot seemed determined to shoot you down?"

Masters shook his head. "I thought it a bit queer at the time. But I don't know."

"Why?" Kramer demanded sharply.

Masters laughed. "That's my secret. Try to figure it out yourself."

KRAMER'S face turned into a mask of hate, a mask more frightful than the one he had tossed on the desk. His fingers tapped at a block of buttons on the desk.

"Phil—"

Masters tried to gasp a warning to his companion as a hissing sound broke the silence. Masters' eyes spotted a metal nozzle in a crevice of rock. He knew it was too late to help his friend, for the gas escaping from the nozzle could be nothing else but propanesia. It would be only a second or so before Warren's mind, his own as well, would be numbed, dulled to such an extent that only Kramer's orders would register.

Masters' body began to grow rigid. The hiss of the gas became a roar.

"Answer me, Masters," Kramer snarled. "You are ready to obey my orders, are you not?"

"Yes," Masters said slowly, his voice almost to a whisper.

"Yes, what," sneered the Nazi. "Have you lost your manners?"

"Yes, sir," Masters said hesitantly.

"Ah, that is better," the Nazi said. A triumphant smile lighted his face. "If the *Fuehrer* could only see me now, sitting here with the great Eagle cowering before me, ready to do my bidding like a dog! You will obey my every command, won't you, Masters?"

"Yes, Herr Kramer," Masters said dully, his eyes riveted on the Nazi.

"Splendid, splendid," chuckled Kramer. "I have lived my whole life for this moment. Perhaps tomorrow night will be the moment when I send the Eagle out to lead this *Staffel* of American B-Twenty-fours, when I order them to dive on the convoy and block the canal."

Kramer sat back in his chair and smiled at the tall straight American Eagle.

"Tell me, Masters. Is your friend's

name Warren, or was Warren one of the dead men you so foolishly placed at the controls of the bomber?"

"His name is Warren, *Herr* Kramer, Philip Warren," Masters said softly.

"Ah, so," Kramer grinned. "We have both of you. That is good." He turned on Warren. "Philip Warren!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir," Warren answered quickly.

"Have you ever done any fighting?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know where to hit to knock a man out?"

"Sure." Warren smiled. "I've smacked plenty on the button."

Kramer grinned. "This is really a moment. Philip Warren, I wish you to take a position in front of Masters."

Warren took a step forward and turned to face the Eagle.

"Now, Warren," Kramer ordered, "I want you to knock this man out. He has just insulted you by calling you an American. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," Warren answered.

He clenched his fist and brought a haymaker up from the floor. There was a sharp smack as Warren's knuckles landed flush on the Eagle's jaw. Masters' eyes became glassy. His knees sagged and he fell forward on his face.

"That the way, *Herr* Kramer?" Warren asked, as he rubbed his knuckles.

Kramer nodded. "*Wunderbar!* Magnificent, Warren. Conclusive proof of my power." He turned to the grinning guards. "Take them to the cell block. You will have to carry this one, for I think he will sleep a while."

TWO guards stepped forward and picked up the unconscious Eagle. The other motioned Warren toward a door behind the table.

Kramer swung around and slid back a panel in the wall. He snapped a switch and picked up a mike. He called sharply two or three times, then waited eagerly.

"*Ja wohl, Herr* Marshal," he answered as a brusque voice crackled through the speaker above the transmitter. "*Ja wohl, I* have him. Tomorrow night I will send him out with the bombers. . . . *Ja, Herr Rommel, we*

have the Eagle in our power. And *Herr* Rommel, you would have laughed to see my little test. *Ja, I* will join you as soon as they have taken off . . . *Auf Wiedersehen, Herr* Rommel. *Heil Hitler!*"

CHAPTER IX

Viaud Returns



WHEN he heard the door close, Masters opened his eyes, rubbed his jaw and smiled ruefully at Warren who was sitting on a bench in the cell.

"Glad he won't remember this when I snap him out of it," Masters said as he walked over to Warren whose sole interest seemed to be a set of bruised knuckles.

He paused in front of his friend, talked quietly for a moment or two to get his full attention.

"Phil," he said softly as he touched Warren's cheek. "Phil, look at me. That's right—keep your eyes on mine. Just relax. Easy now—thata boy. Keep your eyes on mine."

Warren began to sweat. He rubbed his hands together as he looked into the Eagle's deep blue eyes. A shudder ran over him and he seemed to relax completely.

"Now we got it, Phil," Masters encouraged. "You're coming back. Come on—you're Phil Warren of the good old U. S. A. Remember?"

Warren nodded. A puzzled smile crossed his tanned face.

"What happened, John? We crash? Gosh, I've been having the darnedest nightmare. Some bogey man was trying to scare the pants off of me."

"You've been under the effects of propanesia," Masters said with relief.

"Propan-who?" Warren asked dully, while he examined the abrasions on his right fist.

"Propanesia," Masters explained. "Remember that tank you saw Haugh carrying around the camp at Three XB. He wasn't exterminating flies and mosquitos. He was gassing the men as they slept on their cots."

"You mean killing them?" Warren gasped in horror.

Masters shook his head. "It's a gas

the doctors are experimenting with. Dulls the brain and puts the victim under the power of the man who knows how to use it. All he has to do is suggest a thing and the man under its influence will carry it out. Back in the States the police are trying to get permission to use it in their work."

"But how about you?" Warren asked quickly. "How come you didn't get a dose of this propan something or other?"

A slow smile spread across the Eagle's face.

"I beat him to it."

"You mean you gassed him instead?" Warren asked hopefully.

"I pulled a Yogi trick and went into a state of suspended animation," Masters explained. "Learned the trick in India a few years ago—and believe me it came in handy."

Warren shook his head. "I don't get you. Make it simpler."

Masters sat down beside Warren. "It's sort of self-hypnosis, Phil. I slowly put myself under by using a gleam of light reflecting from that metal glove of Kramer's as a focal point. Stopped my breathing entirely. Only my brain was alive."

"How happens I came around so fast? Didn't I get a bad dose?"

"As much as the others," Masters said. "But since the gas affects the brain a person can be brought back to normal by mental suggestion. That's what I did with you, and what I'm going to do with the others."

Masters touched Warren on the shoulder and gently pushed him back against the wall.

"Your system's been under quite a strain, Phil," he said. "Better rest now. I'm going to dope out some way of beating this guy Kramer."

For a while the two men sat in silence, while Masters reviewed the situation and tried to work out some plan by which they could escape before Kramer put his dastardly plan into operation.

ONE thing puzzled the Eagle. That was the absence of guards in the corridor outside the cell. Now and then he could hear the faint murmur of voices, snatches of conversation indicated the rest of the American

Ferrying Command men were not far away, but he heard no tramp of feet to indicate that men were on guard.

"How you feeling, Phil?" he asked finally.

"Hungry, but otherwise I'm okay," Warren said. "Say, how about that Ration D you said you had? If I don't get something pretty soon I'll start chewing that chocolate-flavored handkerchief."

"Have you still got it?" Masters asked eagerly.

"Sure," Warren said.

He reached into his pocket and produced the oil-silk pouch. Masters took it and put it into his own pocket.

"Say what's this all about?" Warren growled. "You told me how Haugh expected to knock us all out with the propo-stuff. What comes after?"

"They've got the crews and the B-Twenty-fours in an underground hangar here."

"So?"

"Tomorrow night they're going to send us out to dive on a convoy passing through the Suez Canal."

"They can't do it!" Warren exclaimed. "Like to see them make a bunch of Yanks bomb their own ships."

"I didn't say bomb," Masters cut in. "When I said dive, I meant dive. A dive right into the ships with a full load of bombs."

"I still say they can't make us do it," asserted Warren.

"Don't forget," Masters said slowly, "this propanesia is terrible stuff in the hands of a madman."

"Maybe some weak-minded drip would obey orders," Warren said, and shrugged. "But not a he-man."

Masters laughed softly.

"What's funny?" Warren demanded.

"The way you classified yourself," Masters smiled. "I won't forget that—'weak-minded drip.'"

"Don't tell me he could have made me do whatever he wanted," Warren snapped.

Masters hesitated. "I sure hope you were under the influence of propanesia Phil." The Eagle caressed his jaw. "If you weren't you put on a good act. Maybe you were just try-

ing to get even."

"You're talking riddles again," Warren grouched. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing," Masters replied. "Quiet! I hear somebody coming."

The door was thrown open and a disheveled figure was pushed into the dimly-lighted cell.

"We got company," Warren said quickly. "Just a Hun trick to get information."

The man stood swaying under the light. His eyes gleamed wildly in his unshaven face. His lips were parched and dry.

"*Bon soir, monsieurs,*" he greeted them weakly.

"Pierre!" Masters exclaimed as he leaped forward and led the man to a seat. "Pierre Viaud."

"No kidding," Warren said. Eagerly he helped Masters lay the weary man on the bench. "Gosh, it is. He looks queer—sort of crazy-like."

"Gassed," Masters said shortly. "Let him rest a while, then I'll get to work on him. . . ."

A FEW hours later Masters had Pierre Viaud back to normal. The Frenchman, his strength rapidly returning, was brushing what was left of his uniform.

"One of their patrols picked me up and brought me here in a car," Viaud explained when his wits came back to him. "Then they took me in to see a very nasty-looking individual with a metal hand. After that I do not remember much, *mes amis*. *Sacre!* But it is good to see you two again. Was it you in that plane?"

"It sure was," Warren grinned. "But what was the idea of trying to knock us down?"

"I was only trying to force you down," Viaud explained. "My Father, who is still Chief of Intelligence—for General de Gaulle now—informed me that American planes were disappearing somewhere along the route used by the Ferrying Command. I watched the sky and one day I saw this Focke-Wulf west of Three XB. I lost it in the clouds and later I saw the same ship far to the east. I knew it must have refueled somewhere nearby."

"So you started patrolling?" Masters queried.

"Yes," Viaud said. "And a few nights later I followed a B-Twenty-four. But it disappeared before it reached Four K. That was about the time General Tremaine informed my Father you were on your way to take a hand. That is why I tried to get you to land tonight. I thought it might perhaps be you in that B-Twenty-four, and that the three of us could work together again."

"We're going to work together, Pierre," Masters said, dropping his arm across his old friend's shoulders. "And we're going to lick them again. With the three of us on the job they can't win."

"But what happened to the B-Twenty-fours, *mes amis*?" Viaud asked. "And what is behind all this? I mean besides doing away with American-built planes?"

Masters swiftly explained the setup to Pierre.

"The swine!" Viaud cursed roundly when Masters had concluded. "It is always some filthy trick they use. You have a plan for beating this pig Kramer, I hope."

Masters shrugged. "We've got to get out of this place first. After that—well, frankly, I don't know."

"How about us eating some of that Ration D," Warren proposed. "Didn't I hear you mention something about it tasting like chocolate? Be better than chewing on that handkerchief."

Masters took the cake of Ration D from his pocket and slowly began to peel back the foil. Suddenly he stopped and stared at the extra-emergency ration.

"Come on—give," Warren urged.

"Just a minute, Phil." Masters pulled the ration cake away from Warren's outstretched fingers. "I got an idea."

"Of all the times to get one of those things!" Warren sighed. "What better use could we put that ration business to than eat it? I'll bet Pierre's starved, too. Aren't you, Pierre?"

Masters grinned as he studied the ration cake. He took out his penknife and cut the cake in half. Then dividing the one half into three equal parts he gave his companions their share.

AS HE nibbled his own he looked at the penknife and held it out for the others to see.

"There's proof of the conceit of that bird we are up against. If he didn't think he had me in his power he'd never have left me with that." He glanced toward the cell door. "Say, that's why there are no guards looking in on us all the time."

"Is that good?" Warren asked slowly.

"Good and bad," Masters said. He glanced at the chocolate. "If I'm going to make this thing work I've got to get the attention of a guard."

"You're not going to give him the rest of that, are you?" Warren yelled.

"Maybe," Masters said. He carefully wrapped the foil around the remaining half of the ration and put it in his pocket. "But I'll have to wait a while before I go into action."

CHAPTER X

The Plan Clicks



WARREN came while the Eagle and his two companions waited, but their only way of knowing was by their watches. Noon slipped by. The long afternoon seemed like a century. Still Masters waited calmly for the moment to set his desperate plan into operation.

When finally their watches indicated that evening had come, Masters got up. He took the ration cake from his pocket and pulled back the foil as he walked toward the door.

"Easy, John," Warren pleaded. "Don't give him all of it."

"Steady," Masters shot over his shoulder.

He pressed his face to the grille half-way up the door. He waited until he heard footsteps in the corridor.

"*Kommen sie hier,*" he called.

"*Was ist?*" the guard asked.

"*Wir wollen heiss wasser.*"

"*Heiss wasser?*" the guard said cautiously.

"What in blazes do you want ice water for?" Warren barked.

"Shut up," Masters ordered, without turning. "*Ja, heiss wasser,*" he re-

peated to the guard. "*Verstehen sie chokolade, heiss chokolade?*"

He held the ration cake up so the guard could both see and smell.

"Ah!" breathed the German. "*Chokolade. Das ist gut.*"

"*Verstehen sie?*" Masters smiled.

"*Ja wohl.*" The German guard grinned. "*Heiss chokolade.*" He disappeared down the corridor.

Masters walked back to the bench and grinned at Warren.

"Let that be a lesson to you, Phil. I think that nasty little Nazi's appetite is going to get him into a lot of trouble."

While he waited for the guard to return Masters took out the handkerchief and wadded it tightly in the palm of his hand.

Warren watched him. The frown on his face deepened as Masters held out his hand to see if any of the fabric that was stained with chocolate ice-cream was visible. He glanced at Viaud and shook his head.

"Same ole Masters, Pierre," he said slowly. "Always get a trick up his sleeve. Come on, John—let's see the bunny."

The door opened then and the grinning guard hurried in with a small kettle of hot water.

"*Danke schön,*" Masters said to the Hun.

He took the kettle and placed it on the bench. Then with his knife he began to shave the cake of Ration D into the steaming water.

Warren, watching him closely, cnoked back a sharp exclamation as he saw Masters let the handkerchief fall into the hot water.

"Notice he brought a cup for himself, Phil," Masters said quickly, to cover Warren's outburst.

He reached over and took the spoon the Nazi had brought along. Carefully he stirred the thickening ration, pressing the handkerchief to the bottom of the kettle.

"What's he got in the bottle?" Warren asked, nodding toward the Hun.

Masters glanced over his shoulder and smiled at the guard.

"*Schnapps.*" The German grinned, holding up the colorless liquor.

"Going to repay our hospitality and treat us," Masters said, turning his

attention to the kettle. "Guess we're ready. Here, Fritz, let's have your cup."

The German handed Masters the tin cup. Keeping the handkerchief anchored to the bottom of the kettle, the Eagle poured a cupful of the hot dark liquid and handed it to the guard.

WARREN'S face wrinkled with disgust.

"Stewed handkerchief—that's a hot one," he whispered to Pierre.

"Easy," Masters cautioned, while the beaming Nazi moved the cup of fragrant chocolate back and forth under his nose.

"*Chokolade!*" The Nazi beamed. "*Das ist sehr gut.*" He motioned toward the bottle of *schnapps* he had placed on the bench.

Masters shook his head, picked up the kettle and held it to his lips.

"Did you really—" Warren gulped as Masters set the kettle down.

"Act, Mister, act," Masters cautioned. "But not dumb."

Warren picked up the kettle and went through the motions of drinking. Pierre followed suit and smacked his lips as he put the kettle down.

The German held the empty cup toward Masters and motioned toward the kettle.

"See what I mean, Phil?" Masters poured another cup of chocolate. "He's going to let his stomach get him into trouble . . . Catch him! There he goes."

Warren and Pierre leaped forward and caught the German as he slumped toward the floor.

Masters set the cup down, searched the man's pocket, and found the keys.

"You keep him here a while," he ordered. "See if you can get most of that bottle of *schnapps* down his gullet without choking him. I'll be back. Better put him behind the bench in case anybody looks in. Be seeing you."

Leaving Warren and Viaud to work over the unconscious Nazi, Masters tiptoed down the corridor until he came to the door of a cell where three men sat huddled on a bench.

He waited until the men were used to his presence, then began giving one of them the same treatment he had given Warren and Viaud.

"You understand, buddy?" he said, when the man came out of it. "You keep right on acting dopy. A lot depends on us tonight. Take a good look at these others and try to act as they do."

The man stared at his two companions. His lips curled back in a snarl of hate for the men who were responsible for their condition.

"Whitey and Cummings," he muttered angrily. "Only rats would do a thing like that to those guys."

"Come on," Masters cautioned. "You stay with Warren and Viaud. I'll come



back here and bring these two around. If anybody looks in there'll be the right number of prisoners in the cell. I've got to work fast."

The man nodded and went down the corridor to join Warren and Viaud, while Masters set to work with feverish speed to undo the foul handiwork of the slinking Nazi, Kramer.

Working from one cell to the other he finally freed all the Americans from their mental bonds. As soon as each was brought back to normal, Masters instructed him to study the others so that when the time came he could still pretend to be in Kramer's power.

It was within an hour of midnight when Masters returned to the cell where Warren and Viaud waited nervously, fearing any minute that the Eagle's desperate plan would be discovered. But Kramer, thanks to his own ego, was lax in having the corridors well-patrolled. He thought every American he held prisoner, including the Eagle, was held in the ruthless grasp of propanesia. That the Eagle could ever circumvent his plans and spoil his scheme never entered his mind.

MASTERS gave the American he had sent to Warren and Pierre Viaud his orders and sent him back to his original cell. Then he turned to his companions.

"How much of that *schnapps* did you get into the Hun?"

"Pretty near all." Warren grinned. "Gagged a bit, but we massaged his throat and got it down."

"Good," the Eagle said. "Our plan's clicking in high. The others are raring to go. Believe me, the Nazis will hear the old American Eagle scream tomorrow."

"Meaning you?" Warren grinned at Masters.

"Cut it," Masters muttered. "Let's get our little Nazi boy in a corner down the corridor. Pierre, you wait here."

They carried the unconscious guard far down the rock-walled corridor and deposited him in a corner. Masters carefully let the remainder of the *schnapps* trickle over the front of the man's uniform, then placed the empty bottle in his lap.

"What a beautiful bun he's got on!" Warren muttered. "A handkerchief cocktail with *schnapps* for a chaser."

"Come on," snapped Masters. "They'll be going into action pretty soon."

They returned to their cell and sat down. Warren turned to the Eagle.

"Don't keep me in suspense any longer, John. I'd like to know what was in that chocolate besides a handkerchief."

Masters glanced at the kettle behind the bench and smiled. "I think it was a barbituate. A slug puts you out cold and when you come to you're sick. That ice-cream Hobson ate was spiked with it. Recognized the odor on that sample I swiped. Handkerchief was well saturated and it made a Mickey Finn out of the chocolate."

Warren shook his head and grinned. "Well, *Herr Nazi*'s had his chocolate. What do we do?"

"We're going to play games with *Herr Rommel*," said Masters. "After which the Ferrying Command carries on and delivers those B-Twenty-fours."

"How about bombs?" Viaud asked.

"They're supplying those, I guess," Masters said slowly. "Must have ferried a bit on their own . . . So they thought Allied planes would fly over the canal, did they? We'll show them a trick or two they never thought of."

CHAPTER XI

Eggs for Rommel



SHORTLY after midnight things began to happen in Kramer's underground headquarters. Doors were opened, and slammed shut. Harsh commands were given as the men were called from their cells and lined up.

A sergeant counted the prisoners and announced to an officer that all were accounted for. Then at a command they were marched down the twisting corridor. They were escorted into the room where Kramer, dressed as the Jackal, glowered from behind the desk.

"Here we are again," Masters whispered.

"There's my bad dream," Warren whispered back. "Say, aren't you afraid he'll gas these men all over again?"

"If they do their stuff he won't suspect," Masters said softly.

"Silence!" one of the guards roared. Then he swung toward the masked man and bowed stiffly. "They are all here."

"Good!" Kramer snarled from behind his mask.

He got up and stepped to the wall behind the desk. With his fake metal hand he pulled down a roller map outlining the Suez Canal.

"At dawn you have a duty to perform, gentlemen," he said as he began to place dark oval-shaped stickers along the canal. "Are you ready to obey my orders?"

"Yes," the Americans chorused, taking the lead of the Eagle.

"These represent Allied ships," Kramer went on. "They are to be pocketed in the canal. Bombers flown by Masters, Cummings and Hall will dive on the first three ships. Is that understood? Good. The last three ships in the convoy are to be sunk by the ships piloted by Jarand, Reed, and Long. The bombs are wired in the racks, so you will have to dive your planes and crash on the decks of these ships."

Kramer turned on the assembled men. His eyes gleamed through the

holes in the mask. They passed quickly over the men standing before him as if looking for a hint of failure.

"You are to obey those orders," he snarled at them. "Do you understand?"

Not a man spoke, but each and every one nodded.

"Fine—splendid," Kramer said. "Now this is the course you will fly to reach your objective. North from here to El Alamein. There will be no interference from our planes until you reach the coast. Then a squadron of Focke-Wulf Hundred and nineties, led by myself, will pretend to chase you over the British lines.

"You gunners will fire, but into the air. One or two of my men will pretend to fall. Immediately we attack your formation, you are to divide into two sections. The section led by Masters will head for Suez. The section led by Pilot Cummings will head for Port Said then turn north to pick up the last three ships in the convoy. Those are your orders. They are to be obeyed."

For a moment the room was charged with a silence like death. But not a Yank in the group betrayed the fact that Kramer no longer had them in his power. Death might lie ahead. But they were ready to face death at any time, so long as their dying meant that another blow had been struck at the roots of the Nazi cause.

Then the silence was broken by a new note, the deep rumbling roar of Yankee motors.

"Come, gentlemen," Kramer said quietly. "You have had your orders. Now is the time for action . . . Take them to the field, Sergeant."

The men sighed with relief as they marched from the room. Even the air seemed to have been fouled by this Nazi who masqueraded as the Jackal. And when the doors were opened and they marched out into the cool night air their spirits got a lift that spelled plenty of trouble for Hitler and his scum.

YOU know your planes," Kramer barked. "Proceed to them at once. I will take off shortly in my FW. You are to follow me as far as the Quattara Depression. There I will leave you

and join my men."

"Now ain't this something!" Warren said, as they crawled into the B-24.

"Close the door," Masters ordered sharply. "Might have somebody listening."

"When the door was latched, Masters turned to Warren and Viaud.

"Just three of us now. We haven't got a full crew like the other crates."

"What difference does that make?"

Warren asked, as they moved forward.

"I had a hunch the bombs might be wired with the spinners off," Masters said quietly. "I ordered our boys to check and if that was the case to rig them so they could be dropped by the bombardier. We're short-handed, but I guess we can manage."

"Sacre!" Viaud exclaimed. "They have discovered us!"

"Who?" Masters demanded.

"There are two Nazis in the plane with us," Viaud said excitedly. "The filthy swine! I will kill them with my bare hands. Look! Do you see them coming from the rear?"

Masters turned. For a moment his heart sank. His well-laid plans seemed to be crashing over his head.

"Howdy," one of the "Nazis" said, and chuckled. "We sure had a long wait. This the last play in the game."

Masters grinned as he recognized the bombardier and the gunner who had been left on the desert.

"I was wondering what happened to you two," he said cheerfully.

"We've been doing some wondering, too." The gunner smiled wearily.

"Where'd you get the uniforms?" Warren asked, when Masters had introduced the two men to Viaud.

"Where do you think?" the gunner said significantly. "Hardest part was picking men our size." He turned to Masters. "Ready to call the last play?"

Masters nodded, explained what he wanted done, then went forward and dropped into the seat behind the wheel. He glanced at the instrument panel, then looked out over the moonlit field. Five more B-24s were straining at their leashes, waiting for the signal to hop off the desert field. Off to one side he saw the FW, blue flame spitting from its exhaust stacks.

"Think we can make Cairo for breakfast?" Warren asked as he sat

down beside Masters. "Always had a yen to eat at Shephard's. I'll start at the top and go right down the menu."

"Whatta guy!" Masters smiled at his friend. "You know we have to see that Rommel gets something for breakfast first."

"Oh, he's going to get eggs—nice hardboiled eggs," Warren laughed, then pointed to the FW. "There he goes. Rommel, here we come!"

Masters released the brakes and tensed himself for the take-off. Somewhere ahead was 4 K, the final destination of the B-24s.

With dust clouds trailing behind them the B-24s took off from the desert airdrome under the cliffs and headed north. At their head flew Kramer's FW, and directly behind the over-confident Nazi, Masters held his position at the head of the Yankee formation.

Masters was alone in the control cabin while his companions busied themselves with unwiring the bombs and getting them ready to be dropped from the bombardier's position.

IT WAS two hours before Warren, his face streaked with oil and his hands grimy, joined the Eagle.

"All set," Warren said, and grinned as he dropped into his seat. "And Pierre's got the receiving end of the wireless working."

"Any news?" Masters asked.

"Plenty," Warren said. He wiped his sleeve across his face. "This Rommel guy's driving the British back to Alexandria. Got another full blitz going. Boy, if they plugged the canal there'd be no way for the British to get reinforcements!"

"They're not going to plug it," growled Masters. "We're going to create the little diversion the British need for a breathing spell."

Warren shook his head. "I hope you're right, John. Say, kinda queer isn't it? I mean this having a Nazi for a leader."

Masters glanced at the riding lights of the plane flying so confidently. His face seemed to relax as he grinned.

"Funny about this Nazi," he said. "He thinks he's tops and all the time his motor is carrying him right to his friend, Satan. That's the way it's

going to be with the others. Hitler and his crew think they're riding the crest of a wave to victory, when all the time that wave is carrying them head-on into a bigger wave. When the big crash finally comes it's going to be terrific. Hitler's mob is going to be overwhelmed, sure as you're hungry, Phil."

"Ah, the great John Masters dabbles in mental telepathy as well as hypnotism," Warren smiled while he gently rubbed the bruised knuckles of his right hand.

"It's not mental telepathy," Masters quickly returned. "It's habit."

The two men fell silent as the big B-24 winged its way northward across the desert. Around them they could see the lights of the other planes where men sat tensed, waiting for the moment when they could strike a blow for freedom.

"Ferrying Command's going to get some licks in on its own tonight," Masters finally said, breaking the long silence. "Quattara Depression lies dead ahead. We ought to spot the northern rim as dawn breaks."

"Isn't the Sphinx around here somewhere?" Warren asked, glancing out of the panel.

"Northeast a bit," Masters informed him. "Why? Going sightseeing?"

"No," Warren said. "Just wondering what she'd say if she knew about this."

"Nothing, as usual," Masters replied. "Look—Kramer's banking. Going to make a final check to see if everything is all right, I suppose."

"Let him check and double-check," Warren muttered. "You think we're soon there?"

Masters nodded toward the east. A thin ribbon of pink was beginning to flush the eastern horizon.

"There he goes. Boy, look at him pour the soup to that boiler!"

"Want me to check the gun positions?" asked Warren.

"Wouldn't be a bad idea. We're going to be short-handed. And you want a hand in it, don't you?"

"Certainly," Warren said promptly. "I can squeeze a trigger with the next guy. I got a yen to knock me down a Nazi or two. Give me an appetite for breakfast. How about me getting back

in the tail turret?"

"You'll need a shoe-horn, but go ahead," Masters said grimly. "Pierre will be near if I need a hand. Get a couple of Nazis for me, will you?"

"Okay," Warren said grimly, as he left the seat. "As somebody I know says, 'I'll be seeing you.'"

CHAPTER XII

A Blow for Freedom



HECKING the instruments, Masters lifted his eyes to the north where the Mediterranean began to creep over the horizon, a broad expanse of rose-washed water.

"Now for the last play," the Eagle mused as he settled his feet on the rudder. "Pilot to bombardier," he called over the inter-phone. "Bombardier!"

"Yes, sir," the man in the nose of the plane answered.

"Sorry you haven't a regulation sight," Masters said. "Have to go in low."

"Okay, sir," the bombardier replied, with a chuckle. "Doolittle didn't have a regulation sight either, but he smacked them. You give me a straight run and I'll do the rest."

"Here we go for a touchdown then, fellows," Masters said crisply. "Everybody on their toes for the last play."

"Planes approaching from the west, sir," the gunner in the left-hand turret said quietly.

Masters spotted the glint of dawn on the wings of the FWs.

"Don't open up until we've laid our eggs," he ordered. "Got to take them entirely by surprise."

"You're calling the signals," the gunner said, over the inter-phone. "There they come! Kinda pretty, aren't they?"

"We'll spoil their looks," Phil growled from the tail. "Boy, is this a tight squeeze!"

"Why don't you try reducing?" Masters retorted, as the FWs climbed up behind them.

"There's El Alamein, I guess," the bombardier called. "See a pile of stuff moving around it."

Masters' eyes narrowed. He watched

the long line of Nazi mechanized troops moving along the shores of the Mediterranean like a Gargantuan green snake.

"Steady, fellows! An inferno is about ready to pop."

Masters spoke calmly into the inter-phone while he watched the other Yank bombers crowd closer as if looking for him to set the pace.

The next few moments were filled with a nerve-shattering tension as they neared the center of Nazi activities.

"There's a big dump right ahead of us," Masters finally said. "Let's give it a stick."

"Okay," came the bombardier's voice. "You say when."

"Where are the FWs, Phil?" the Eagle called.

"Sitting behind us," Phil Warren answered. "Looks like they're about ready to put on their act."

"Here we go then, fellows!" Masters pushed the stick forward. "And keep your eyes peeled for Kramer's ship. Game won't be over until we get that."

The B-24, with motors roaring, hit the chute that led to El Alamein, before which the British were fighting to stop Marshal Rommel's rolling horde of Nazis.

"Steady on that dump," Masters cautioned. "Get a stick in that before they get wise."

"We're on it," the bombardier answered tensely.

"Take over!"

Masters lifted his hands from the wheel. For a moment or two the bombardier had control of the ship. Then suddenly the plane lifted and the Eagle knew that a stick of bombs was on its way to salute the enemy.

"Eggs to make an omelet for Rommel!" Warren cried as he watched the bombs corkscrew a moment, then straighten out. "A hit, a full hit—smack dab in the middle! Hey, get out of here! Stuff's flying for a fare-you-well."

MASTERS smiled grimly when he heard the roar of the dump going skyward. Off to the left he saw a column of smoke leap toward the morning heavens and knew that one of the other American planes had scored

on a big fuel dump. The air rocked around him as the huge bombs, well-placed by cool-headed Yanks, let go with a roar. The area around El Alamein had suddenly become an inferno.

The FWs, led by Kramer, tried to stop them. But the Yanks of the Ferrying Command were not being stopped that morning. Back and forth across the shattered terrain the pilots, led by the Eagle, wove their way, while their bombardiers sighted and let go with shattering bombs, and their gunners filled the air with leaden death.

"That's the stuff, fellows!" Masters cried above the din. "Keep 'em falling. Nice shooting, Pierre!"

"It feels good to be fighting at your side again, Masters."

Viaud laughed as an FW turned turtle in the air and wove a scarf of black smoke while it hurtled toward the ground.

With Nazi supply dumps ablaze and supply columns shattered and disorganized along the roads, Masters began to climb. Bomb racks were empty and on every side he was being harassed by Kramer's men.

He wagged his wings in a prearranged signal and the B-24s closed in tight formation. Machine-guns chattered on all sides as the FWs fought to bar the way.

Kramer's ship zoomed and screamed around the formation, looking for an opening that led to the ship flown by the Eagle.

Masters, his eyes narrowed to slits, his hands steady on the wheel, led the B-24s on toward the British lines. Twice he was forced to turn aside as the FWs threw themselves across his chosen path. And twice one of the Focke-Wulfs paid for coming within range of eager Yankee gunners.

And through it all Masters kept his eye on a single FW. He wanted that ship. He wanted the man who flew it. That man must die before he could turn his evil skill against the Allies again.

Suddenly a formation of Spitfires came hurtling out of the rising sun to join the battle. The British reinforcements took the FWs by surprise, splitting them wide apart, driving them in all directions.

And out of the mêlée came a single Nazi ship roaring straight at the ship flown by the American Eagle.

"He's trying to ram us," the bombardier yelled as he opened up.

Masters nodded grimly. His hands tightened on the wheel, his feet tensed on the rudder while he watched his bombardier pour burst after burst at the onrushing ship. But there was no stopping the man who had failed, a fanatic who would gladly die if at the same time he could take the *Fuehrer's* most dreaded enemy with him.

The Eagle waited. The supreme moment of his career had come. This time he dare not make a mistake. His right foot poised on the rudder. His knuckles were white on the wheel. Through the bullet-proof shield over the cockpit he could see Kramer's weird eyes, eyes gleaming with hate.

Then the split second of action came. Masters' foot hit the rudder. His arms turned to steel springs as he threw the wheel over. The B-24 answered and went into a split-S bank. There was a crash as the left wing-tip nicked the left wing of the FW. The B-24 shuddered from nose to tail turret, then righted itself while the FW curved away drunkenly with its left wing folding back over the shattered cockpit cover.

"He's trapped!" the bombardier of the B-24 shouted shakily. "Boy, I never want to live through that moment again!"

"A rotten egg for Rommel!" Warren yelled with glee.

JOHN MASTERS relaxed as he watched the FW spin crazily toward the ground. In that twisted heap of wreckage was the man who had sought to stop the Ferrying Command. Kramer, like his father, had tried to tangle with the Eagle, and like his father he had paid the price.

"Our job is finished now, fellows," Masters said over the inter-phone. "You sure made a swell team and played the game right to the hilt."

"Does that mean we're heading for breakfast?" Warren shouted over his shoulder as the Spitfires formed up to escort the B-24s.

Masters seemed a bit weary as he nodded.

"After we've had a bite we'll deliver these B-Twenty-fours as per orders," he said. "Then there'll be one little job to do before we go back to fishing."

"What now?" Warren asked in alarm.

"Those fellows back at Three XB," Masters said slowly. "I've got to make sure there isn't another Hun around there."

Warren seemed relieved as he looked through the panel toward Alexandria for a moment. Then he turned to Masters.

"You know, John," he said, "I've been thinking about this propo-stuff." He paused and held up his bruised knuckles. "Do you suppose this Kramer could have ordered me to hit something? You know—just to prove I was under his influence?"

A slow smile crept over the Eagle's face. He lifted his hand and caressed a sore spot on his jaw.

"Maybe, Phil," he said. "Maybe you did hit something hard. I couldn't answer that one." And the Eagle concluded under his breath, "Not if I want to have any peace."



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MODEL FIGHTING SHIPS

A Department of Accurate Aircraft Plans

HOW TO BUILD THE BRITISH S. E. 5A

THE British S. E. 5A was a trim, speedy single-seater scout that held its place in the First World War skies against all comers.

The dihedral of both top and lower wings give it a distinctive appearance. When these planes are used in First World War movies you can spot this characteristic when the planes are little more than dots in the film. The sleek, tapered fuselage and the tailored radiator give a trim modern appearance to the job. In order to keep the nose thin and streamlined, the encased rocker arms at either side of



the "V" shaped motor were allowed to protrude through the cowling. This is clearly shown in the front and side view drawings.

The four cross sections show that from the radiator to the tail the top surfaces of the fuselage are curved; rather flat up front and nearly a half circle farther back.

Following the general custom in favor with the British biplane manufacturers of the World War period, both top and lower wings are fitted with ailerons. This adds to your job of rigging but makes for a glittering display of shiny lines if you use thin piano wire for this part.

For those who are a little hazy as to how to interpret scale drawings let's give you a few tips. A dash and dot line means a wire. A broken or

dotted line shows a part of construction which would not be seen in an actual ship. It is a phantom view.

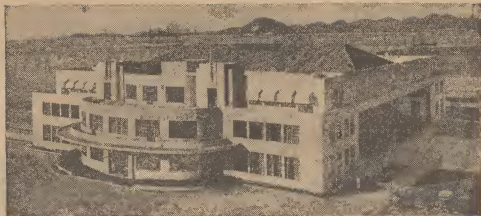
Another case where we use the dotted line is when one part of a drawing is hidden by another part, such as the wheels and axle of the front view being overlapped by the fuselage of the side view. Lines are drawn through the fuselage and labeled A, B, C, D and E to show you at what points the labeled cross sections are measured.

A cross section is a view of the shape of the part as though it were sliced cleanly in two and you looked directly into the flat surface of the slice. The scale in the corner of the top view page gives you the actual measurement in feet of the plane if you use three-eighths of an inch to measure on your job for every foot in the actual plane.

Note that the wings actually start a short distance out from the fuselage. Wing butts on the lower part of fuselage are the anchoring parts. On the top wing a center section is installed. It was possible through this construction to store these planes in a small place by dismantling the wings. The lacing along the side of the fuselage gives a chance for super-detail, as does the long exhaust stack and the engine protruding from the cowling.

The wiring, looking from the front, appears complicated, but if you decide definitely which wiring belongs to the tail assembly, the wing wiring becomes clear and you will have no trouble if you watch both front and side views in determining the exact rigging between the wings.

One Lewis gun on the top wing and one Vickers on top of the cowling was the armament carried by the



Courtesy Brazilian Government Trade Bureau

PANAIR BUILDING AT SANTOS DUMONT AIRPORT

The 27,000 miles of navigable rivers in Brazil are not the answer to the country's transportation problems. Neither are the 2500 miles of railroads which traverse the flat country and connect only the important centers of population. It is unthinkable to consider pushing a line through swamps and jungles as a paying proposition.

Fortunately, aviation is turning the trick for Brazil. It is a "must" enterprise if that tremendous country is to take advantage of the treasures that lie beneath its soil or are concealed in the dark recesses of the jungle. And it is a "must" for victory as well.

Aviation does not need steel rails nor rights-of-way on which to propel its equipment. Neither does it need trestles or tunnels dug through solid rock to push its way through. It needs only space, and Brazil has more space than any country in the world except Russia.

Twenty years ago it would have required a rubber broker in New York City about seventy-two days to reach the upper portion of the Amazon. In that vicinity were wild rubber trees which natives tapped, bringing the chicle to the river stations. Today the same rubber broker could reach the same a-million-miles-from-nowhere-spot in less than seventy-two hours and be back in the U.S.A. in time to enjoy his week-end on Long Island.

That's what aviation has done for

Brazil. It has brought its remote regions to the front steps of the average person of modest means. Though the flatboat-and-donkey days still vie with aviation, it is only a matter of time till they will cease to be of any real importance in Brazil's economic life.

An Air-Minded Country

Interest in flying was already at a fever heat when war was declared. Cities and towns whose inhabitants had never seen a plane until recent years already boast of aero clubs where young men and women are learning the rudiments of flying under rules approved by the government. Ports and fields are being constructed as fast as materials for them are available. Except in the heart of the Brazilian Basin, it is said to be possible to locate an excellent landing field in Brazil every three hundred miles.

Statistics are usually dry, but they have their place in projecting attention to the right spot. So, at this point, consider these figures. In 1930, Brazil boasted only four companies, operating routes that extended not more than 15,000 miles. In 1939, nine companies were operating services over 68,923 miles of routes. From 1,707,907 kilometers of miles flown in 1930, a total of 6,939,682 kilometers was flown in 1939.

While these services were being ex-

OUR GOOD NEIGHBOR'S AIR PROGRESS

tended, more and more passengers were buying tickets at the airports. In 1930 there were only 4,665 paying customers, but in 1939 there were 70,734 cash riders. To accommodate this extensive traffic, Brazil now has five hundred and twelve modern airports, some of which have facilities and accommodations that correspond to LaGuardia Field on a smaller scale. To fly these commercial planes, a hundred and sixty licensed pilots are operating under the authority of the government.

Government Activities

In the development and administration of its air activities, Brazil has profited by the errors of other nations. It is unified. The army and navy branches are under the strict control of the Air Ministry, which was established in 1941 after experts visited this country to examine the set-up, to adopt all that was best and ignore all that was bad.

The Air Ministry also has control of the Civil Aeronautics branch, which makes the rules for the training of pilots, mechanics and apprentices. The Civil Aeronautics branch is committed to the policy of giving co-operation and assistance to the Aero Clubs by placing instructors and training planes at their disposal. Further, the Civil Aeronautics branch also controls all commercial flying in Brazil.

Nothing is left undone to give civil aviation in Brazil all the encouragement possible. The country recognizes that, owing to geographical conditions, it is backward in railroad and highway construction, and therefore must rely on wings to unify the nation and reduce space.

Another branch of Brazil's aviation is the Military Airmail organized in 1930. The Military Airmail is the real pioneer in Brazil. It has been operating silently and efficiently during the last ten years, delivering mail and express packages which could never have reached their destinations if it had been necessary to rely on other means of transportation.

The Military Airmail's position in Brazilian history corresponds somewhat to North America's Pony Ex-

press of the days when frontiers were being pushed back to make room for expanding civilization. That is what Brazil's Military Airmail is doing in South America.

Doves of Peace

In the early days of the service, savage tribes residing in the jungles viewed these monsters of the air as engines of death and destruction. They contrived all sort of hocus pocus, including human sacrificial rites, to try to get them to fall from the skies. Now they greet their approach with open arms, for they have learned that they are doves of peace, bringing shiny trinkets and useful articles from the great cities on the plains.

Air transportation is moving ahead rapidly in Brazil, but there has been one obstacle to equally fast development in aircraft manufacture. That was the inability of a neutral Brazil to obtain spare parts from the United States in sufficient quantities.

Brazil formerly obtained motors and tubing from Germany and Japan, but must now rely on Uncle Sam for these needed supplies. However, the priority situation which compels the United States to supply England, Russia and China with war materials to win the war, was impeding airplane manufacture in Brazil before her entry as an active comrade in arms. There are only four factories in the country now, all engaged in turning out trainer planes, while there is a government-owned establishment known as the Air Force Base at Ilha Governador, near Rio de Janeiro, that is turning out a few bombers.

It is this factory which will shortly receive motors and parts that the United States Government recently promised to President Vargas when the latter called attention to his country's urgent need to defend itself from invasion.

Here are also located schools for the training of mechanics and apprentices between the ages of fourteen and seventeen years.

Another government factory is being completed at Minas Gerais. Both seaplanes and landplanes will be constructed there.

One of the most successful factories is located in Sao Paulo, the second largest city of Brazil. A young Brazilian has been making small planes in Sao Paulo that resembles the Piper Cub, made in the United States for civilian use.

These planes have non-spin and non-stall characteristics, and, with the exception of motors and tubings, all material that goes into them is of Brazilian origin. Work at this plant has been temporarily halted, owing to the shortage of equipment from the United States, however.

In planning for the future, Brazil also recognizes that in order to develop aircraft manufacture along the lines of the United States, it must have technical training. At present, there are no schools in Brazil for the teaching of civilian flying except at the Ilha Governador Base.

Program of Education

The present deficiency in technical skill is seen in the fact that, in 1940, there were only two hundred and ninety-seven licensed mechanics throughout the country. But the government is now engaged in a program of education through the public school system and universities that should eventually turn out trained men for an industry that has a future with large potentialities.

Brazil must take full advantage of aviation if the country expects to remain secure from attack by her enemies from across the seas. Brazilians are aware that their shores are virtually unguarded, and dotted with hidden harbors where enemy submarines or surface craft might lie in ambush, waiting to prey on ocean shipping. Even the jungles through which endless rivers flow on their way to the Mother of Rivers are perfect hiding places for enemy aircraft that can drop tons of explosives on important cities without molestation.

Brazil and the United States are aware of the situation, and since Brazil is a full partner in hemispheric solidarity, there is every reason to believe that the South American country will be increasingly favored with essential shipments. She has been well

supplied in recent months, in order to speed up her war effort.

Swift Journeys

One of the most important recent steps in Brazil's commercial aviation was the signing of a contract with Pan American Airways for the construction of five airports. When completed, they will be the last word in port facilities.

The contract, which has twenty years to run, provides that Pan American build fields, make installations, including hangars, administration buildings, radio equipment and weather stations. At the expiration of the contract, all these properties revert to the Brazilian government.

One of the most important bases, the largest already completed, is at Belem in the heart of the jungle. This is a way station along the route from Miami to Rio de Janeiro. This route enables a New Yorker or Chicagoan to be in the Brazilian capital within thirty-six hours of departure. Thirty-six hours!

Brazil, with the cooperation of Pan American interests, has driven out all competition from Axis countries. The *Sindicato Condor*, German controlled, was getting away with murder in extending lines all over South America. But when war clouds loomed over the horizon in Europe and the western democracies became aware of the Fifth Column and Gestapo peril President Vargas, with one sweep of the pen, eliminated the Nazi air empire from South America.

Other Latin American nations followed suit. The *Sindicato Condor* is operating today, but not under German management. It is entirely a Brazilian concern and operates over seven interior routes.

Other domestic companies are the Pan Air of Brazil, operating four routes; *Viacoa Aero Sao Paulo*, three routes; *Ala Litoria*, one route, and the Pan American Airways, operating four routes and connecting with lines tapping Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile and points north.

In the Days of Simon Bolivar

What is expected to shorten the flying from the United States to South

America is a proposed line from Miami to Manaus. That port on the Amazon River was once the center of the world's rubber industry. It boasted a diamond horseshoe in its opera house that was almost as brilliant as that of the Metropolitan in New York.

The route would touch Caracas, Venezuela, according to plans of United States Army engineers who are now engaged in survey work. Upon the completion of this survey and inauguration of the line, cities like Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro will be neighbors of the big cities of the United States.

Because of wings, hemispheric solidarity is achieving success more than for any other reason. The January conference of Latin American prime ministers never could have been as successful as the records show had it not been for Juan Trippe and the visionary men who, fifteen years ago, foresaw the necessity of fast travel between the two Americas.

These diplomats assembled at the Brazilian capital within forty hours. This is all in sharp contrast with the first inter-American conference called by Simon Bolivar in 1826. That conference necessitated such long and difficult journeys that many countries sent no delegates, while others did not arrive until the conference had ended.

While other nations in South America are equally vigilant in their determination not to let things slide in aviation, experts agree that Brazil will move much more swiftly than others toward the front rank. This will be due to her immense size, and lack of other means of travel to reach remote regions within her boundaries.

About ninety per cent of Brazil's resources remain untouched. This is due to lack of adequate transportation. Aviation will remedy this.

From a military point of view, if nothing else, Brazil must build a formidable air force and keep it at war strength at all times. Her Atlantic port, Natal, is only fifteen hundred miles from Dakar, on the African coast.

Hitler's blueprints show that Dakar is the logical jumping-off place for an air armada to invade South America by way of Natal. American military experts, working in conjunction with Brazilian authorities, have this in mind as they work feverishly to supply the southern neighbor with all the essential war materials—bombers and fighter planes—that the situation demands.

The United States cannot afford to let Brazil down. And Brazil cannot afford to let Hitler touch an inch of her soil.

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When I come to, Ambrose is pulling a crab off his empenage, and I peel a starfish off my head

SEA SLICK

By JOE ARCHIBALD

*When Major Bagby is inflated by unexpected good fortune,
Ambrose Hooley and Muley Spink suddenly become heir-minded!*

IT ALL happened because Major Bagby and Ambrose Hooley each got letters in the U. S. mail one day and it is too bad the A. E. F. rural character did not get bombed on the way from the Frog post office. The letters come while we were up fighting a Boche circus with Bugeye Boomer as flight leader. It happened to be a day when von Hoffbrau and his

acrobats must have been off their feed and maybe the sheriff was going to serve papers on the circus.

Ambrose Hooley who is a little tomato that could make the Sphinx so mad it would wake up and fight, has a field day. The runt not only knocked off two Pfalz crates but took half a wing off von Hoffbrau's ship. The wing fell right onto Ambrose, and the

little fathead got a grip on it and carried it all the way home for a souvenir.

Bugeye got two Boche planes and I got one and a half and we fly back to Commercy to show Major Bagby how proud he should be of B Flight, Ninety-third Squadron, U. S. Air Force. We are all puffed up like pups that have gobbled up a bushel of corned willie loaded with arsenic when we get out of the Spads. When we get to the Operations office, Major Bagby looks at us like he had seen us somewhere before but could not remember where.

"Well, we just wrecked the rat cellar," Ambrose says. "We cleaned out that hofbrau until it looks—am I intrudin'?"

"H-m-m-m," Bagby says and yawns. "You don't say." He leans back in his chair and sticks out his chest like he had shot down all the Krauts himself.

"Don't tell me you are a papa again?" Ambrose says. "Well, I'll take a cigar."

"Crackin' smart again, hah, Hooley?" Bagby snaps. "Well, you missing link, I have some news for you that won't make you laugh."

"We can stand it," Ambrose says. "What city north of Berlin has to be bombed? If me and Muley was born earlier they would never have heard of the Merriwell boys."

"Beginning tomorrow morning," Bagby says, "you will have a new C.O. I have already spoken to the brass hats. It will be Boomer. I got a letter today saying as how some barristers in Warwickshire are sure I am the eighth Lord Loganberry who is entitled to an estate of a thousand acres of land and a bank account of forty thousand pounds. So tomorrow I will leave for England and if I get it, Boomer will stay on as Major in this outfit."

"Maybe if you would lay down for a while, you would feel okay again," Ambrose says. "Uncle Willie's brother got brain fever once and thought he was the Twelfth Night of Pythias and he bought a suit of armor and a white horse and rode down the main street. They got him with nets an—"

MAJOR BAGBY slams a letter down on the table and me and

Ambrose take a gander at it. It is the real McCoy as on top of the letter it says, Thropmorton, Thropmorton, Puddlesford and Thropmorton.

"I'll be a—" Bugeye Boomer says.

"You mean the squadron commander," Bagby says. "If I do not choose to return, your commission will come through all right, Boomer. Congratulations. You are excused from flying now as it will take me most of the day to brush you up on your new duties."

"It will take you two years to show him," Ambrose rails. "He couldn't run a laundry, that jughead. Here I am with seven Krauts more than Boomer and—I will resign. This Air Corps is not big enough for both me and Boomer."

"Oh, is that so?" Bugeye yelps. "I will fix you when I get to be your superior, Ambrose Hooley!"

"You never can order me around," Ambrose says. "Just to show you what will happen, Bugeye." The little mutt bangs the flight leader right on the chin and Bugeye goes down for a sixty count.

"That finishes you, Hooley!" Bagby howls as he helps Bugeye up. "Technically, Captain Boomer is a squadron commander right now and in about three days he will be one officially. I'll let him think up the charges against you."

"It suits me," Ambrose says. "Blois or anything is better than bein' a flunkey for that mental deficit. You have to cross the channel on a boat, don't you, Major Bagby? Boys, I hope that Boche raider is hangin' around as usual and has put maybe eight more howitzers on the tub. Bum voyage, Major. I hope all the lifeboats are porous like your summer underwear. Come on, Muley."

"Why?" I asks the little gorilla.

We go to the hut. There is a letter and a package on the table and I feel faint.

"It is about time I heard from Uncle Willie again," Ambrose says and opens the letter and reads it to me.

Dear Ambrose:

This time I have got something that the whole Allied army can use, I am sure. Excuse the writin' as my eyes have bothered me lately. The doctor says it is stig-

matism. You know how shoe leather gets when it gets wet. Also Sam Browne belts and gun holsters. This is a composition that will not only soften them up but polish as well. In a pinch you can use it for shavin' too. It is a miracle, and look how convenience the size of the tubes are. I will not tell you the secret ingredient, though. Just see what you can do with it there as a lot of the big generals ought to have friends who would back a million dollar business. My shingles bother me again.

Love,

Uncle Willie.

"Don't open the package until you put it in a pail of water," I beg of Ambrose.

"Oh, don't be so skittish, Muley. Here is a P. S. that says the name of Uncle Willie's product is 'Smearo.' Ain't he original?"

"No kiddin'," I snap back. "Only one of his kind could be in the world. Even Nature makes mistakes, don't it?"

"What a brain!" Ambrose says. "They always said he was a mental prodigal as when he was five he almost invented a wick for a lamp that wouldn't never have to be replaced. He lost the formula because he tipped over the lamp and burned down the house. He is a wonder, Muley. What a mind he has got!"

"How does anybody know?" I slap back. "No microscope that powerful has ever been invented."

"I am goin' to get sore at you in a minute, Muley," Ambrose snaps. "Go ahead and talk yourself out of general manager of Hoooley, Incorp."

We go up and fight Krauts again just after the noon hour and both me and Ambrose fight twice as well as we know how, we are in such high dudgeon over Bugeye's promotion. We lick Hoffbrau's boys again and even knock off one of our own balloons.

When we land, Ambrose says that the Heinie circus must have only one ring left.

"They can't even put on a good side-show no more," the little runt says. "What we have done to those square-heads the last two days—"

"I have a feeling they will git hunk," I tells him. "I must ask Bagby or Boomer to add four new anti-aircraft guns to our layout. Remind me, Ambrose."

AT MESS that night, Bagby flashes an envelope and takes out some dog-eared papers. He says they are about his family history and that one of them bears the Bagby family crest which come all the way from William the Conqueror.

"That reminds me," Ambrose says. "I must test out Uncle Willie's discovery tonight. Fam'ly crest, huh? Two stone crabs rampagin' on a field of blue funk, I bet. Ha!"

Major Bagby looks at Ambrose like the little ape was something that should be swept up and put into a G. I. can.

"I was going to invite everybody to come and shoot grouse on my estate when the war ends," the C.O. snaps. "But I know one fresh guy that will git shot if he passes a 'no trespassin'' sign."

Bugeye comes out of the Operations office and he says he has dispatches he would like to read out, he being as good as a C.O. at the minute.

"Go ahead, Captain," Bagby says. "You might as well start getting the hang of it. Now here is where I can prove my family lived in England even before Henry the Eighth. It says here—"

The C.O. does not get any further as all at once an awful noise comes in from outside. First the siren goes off, then some anti-aircraft guns. Gothas try to drown out everything else and they have got flugmotors on them that turn over as noiseless as a hippo with a suit of armor on.

Blam! Whang! Boom-boom!

"I told you," I says. "We got this for what we done to von Hoff—"

We get outside the mess shack just in time to see the roof of the ammo shack spin around twice and then take off. Three ackemmas are trying to get from under a tree that has dropped over on them. Ambrose smacks Bugeye as the acting C.O. tried to get in a dugout first. Bagby gets in last and he is glassy-eyed and has a bump on his dome as big as an alligator pear.

"I took his number down," the major mumbles. "I was comin' out of a side street and the ice truck did not stop. I will sue to the limit. You wait—"

"Maybe he has got everything in his

wife's name," I says. A bomb hits close to us and caves in most of the dugout and Bugeye is buried in débris up to his ankles. I screams for somebody to help me pull him out and Ambrose says for me not to be a fool as maybe they won't miss Boomer until it is too late.

"You murderer!" I says nasty. "Git hold of the other foot as he is in head first."

Well, we get Bugeye out and then look around. The drome looks like the Forty-niners had moved in and were diggin' for gold. The whole front of the mess shack is blown out and A Flight's hangar is in shreds as if a hundred Zulus had attacked it with spears.

"You was almost not a Lord Loganberry, huh?" Ambrose says to Bagby who is still a little deranged.

"Huh? Well, I will take no chances no more," Bagby says and gathers up the papers in the mess shack and crams them into an envelope. "Who has needle and thread as I will sew these inside my tunic. Oh, if a bomb had ever hit them, I'd be a pauper."

Me and Ambrose go to our huts and try to sleep but how could we when sixty U. S. grease-monkeys and laborers were filling in the cavities on the tarmac. We talk about the Boche raider that had been stealing all the headlines. They call the Heinie ship *The Plying Dutchman* and to date it has sent over three hundred thousand tons of Allied boats to Davy Jones' Locker. Allied skippers claimed they had hit it dead center with big shells more than once but nothing had happened.

"Maybe in the next war," Ambrose says, "you will be able to sink battle-wagons with airplanes, Muley."

"Don't look at me," I replies. "This is my last guerre. Wouldn't it be an iron twist of fate if the raider should sink Bagby?"

Ambrose indulges in a hearty laugh. The fathead would be in stitches watching citizens do spring cleaning in a morgue.

"It is a wonder the Air Corps isn't asked to get the raider, Muley. Any day now I expect orders to come through for us to put binnacles and crows' nests on the Spads, don't you?

Well, it is a tough day comin' up what with Bagby leavin' an' Bugeye gettin' promoted. I got a good mind to write to my Congressman."

ME AND Ambrose go up at dawn with B Flight but Bugeye sticks to the swivel chair to get the feel of it. We are led into battle by a flyer named Ronald Durkey and I agree with Ambrose that the war was not being run right. We spot fourteen Pfalz planes and Durkey orders us to attack, he having four Spads besides the one he is sitting in.

A terrible three minutes followed, and me and Ambrose manage to escape across the Meuse with two Spads that had become as logy as two turtles tied to anvils. Ambrose goes down to the carpet with his Hisso shooting sparks and I do not dare follow him to see how he makes it as there is only one landing left in my crate.

I am sitting near the ammo shack three hours later when Ambrose walks into the drome. He is limping like he has a cactus shoot in each boot and you can hear him sweat. Ambrose sits down on a big piece of elephant iron that came off the ammo shack during the Gotha raid as he cannot go another step.

"Well, I thought you would be picked up in an urn," I says. "You did get an ear scorched, Ambrose."

"Where is Durkey?" Ambrose says. "I am going to knock out his brains, Muley."

I help Ambrose toward the hut and he says he has just got to get around to doping up his new boots with Uncle Willie's Smearo. "I wonder what is the secret ingredient, Muley," he says.

An hour later we all gather in the mess to bid Major Bagby good-by as he is already packed and has his ticket for a boat train to the Frog beach. The C.O. gives us a great pep talk and says he will not come back if he is really a lord.

"A thousand acres," Bagby says, "with a castle. It is called Withering Heights. After the guerre, don't forget the latch string is out, boys. Money can't change me."

"Nothing could," Ambrose says. "Only a meat-axe. Shall I bring my

hounds? Or some yorks and a tallyho or two. White tie for dinner, chin up-pip pip and all that sort of thing y'know. Rawther!"

"You are not funny, Hooley," Bagby bristles, then pats his chest. "Papers all in order. The squadron car ready. What am I waiting for?"

The C.O. is gone inside of a half hour and Bugeye starts acting important. The first thing he says he is going to do is to prefer charges against Lieutenant Hooley for assaulting him.

"They do not give you more for hittin' a bum twice than they do once, Muley," Ambrose says and he hits Bugeye again and we have to carry the new C.O. into the Operations office and put him in his chair. You can see what a pretty pass the Ninety-third has come to. Ten minutes later Ambrose is ordered to confine himself to his Nissen under arrest.

"It serves you right, Ambrose," I says.

The little mutt bites loose skin off of a knuckle as big as an English walnut and says nothing. I leave him to think over what he will do next and I take a walk. I pause near the ammo shack where greaseballs are lifting the big chunk of elephant iron. I kick something with my toe and stoop down to pick it up. It is a big loose envelope and it has Major Bagby's name on it. I take out some papers and clutch at a groundhog, I feel that wilted. They are the papers telling all about the Bagby family tree. I run to the Nissen and yelp for Ambrose. He is sitting there getting ready to open up the package Uncle Willie sent.

"What do you think, Ambrose?" I says between gasps. "Here are the papers. Bagby must've picked up the wrong ones in the raid. The ones he is carryin' just contain orders for patrols and things like that. We have got to catch him, Ambrose."

"Huh! All we have to do is ask Bugeye can we have a week off and to reserve Pullmans for us," the little bum says. "You git sillier every day. Boys, is that a horse on Bagby."

"Look, Ambrose," I says. "We can git to the coast to stop Bagby. In a Spad. Bugeye Boomer will let me as here is why! If Bagby does not get

the lordship he will come back and be C.O. again and Bugeye wouldn't want that. You are as good as busted anyway and it will give you a chance to git off the drome as you can git on a wing. From the coast you can make your way to Holland and get interned."

"Muley, sometimes you act as if you really was intelligents," Ambrose says. "Go and show Bugeye the papers. I will be ready. I will wrap this brick up and take it with me as maybe I can test it out in Holland and git a patent."

I GO over to see Bugeye. I tell him what is what and show him the papers.

"I got to fly after him and get him before he gits on the Channel boat," I says. "He'll have to come back here if I don't."

"No kiddin'," Bugeye says sourly. "But he will leave again as soon as he picks up the real papers. I wasn't born this P.M., Lieutenant Spink."

"Okay," I says and walk out. "I will tear them up then and when Bagby gets back he will have to stay here. How's them for parsnips, you fat-head?"

"No, Spink. Listen," Bugeye says. "Awright, you have permission to fly to the coast. I was just ribbin' you."

I go to the Nissen and tell Ambrose. The little tomato gets ready for the air. I tell him to walk to the other end of the drome where he can hook on as I taxi across the field.

"I will hedge-hop the sentry there," I points out. "Am I a pal, huh?"

"When I am upstairs I will answer that," Ambrose says.

Ten minutes later we are flying toward the Channel and Ambrose is holding onto a midwing strut next to the fuselage. A Fokker attacks us over the Argonne and I nearly lose Ambrose. He is flying out from a strut and holding on by one hand when I finally duck the Kraut by going into a big cloud. I bet he is swearing something fierce. We run out of gas at Soissons and have to land on a Limey drome. Ambrose gets off the wing and climbs into the pit while I argue with the Limey C.O. and show him my papers.

"The other pilot?" I says to the Camel foreman. "He crashed and I picked him up back there. How far is it to Calais?"

"Hello, Muley," Ambrose says when I walk back to the Spad. "Guess whose turn it is to ride on the wing?"

"You are a dirty doublecrosser, Ambrose," I says. "After what I did for you—"

"Get on if you do not want to walk back to Commercy," the crackpot says. "Looks like fog comin' up and we must not tarry."

The fog did come up and got so thick you could dice it. Flying a Spad through it was easy like wading through a dark cellar filled to the rafters with lard. I yelp at Ambrose Hooley and tell him to put the Spad down.

"Why, this could be worst, Muley. Don't you start beefin' as I know direction by instinct like a crow. I will hit Calais right on the button."

"That is what worries me," I says. "Look, let's give up as maybe the Boche raider will sink Bagby anyway even if we deliver the papers."

We fly for what seems like thirty days and then Ambrose shouts that he is going down as according to his figuring, we should be over the coast.

"Of what?" I yell. "California? We have been up since last week."

AMBROSE lands the Spad in five feet of water, and we skip along the surface like a drunken sea gull for fifty yards and then turn over. Everything goes black and I think I feel a shark nosing me just before my marbles spilled out.

When I come to, I am sitting on a beach and Ambrose is cussing something wicked and is pulling a crab off his empenage. I peel a starfish off my head. My jaw is throbbing.

"I had to hit you, Muley," Ambrose says. "You would of drowned both of us. Where are we?"

"I bet it is the shores of Massachusetts and we are the first to cross the ocean in an airplane," I says. "Shut up!"

"I see a lot of lights," Ambrose says. "I bet it is Calais, Muley. Let's walk."

"Wait until I test for fractures," I

says. "It is a miracle we are alive, Ambrose."

We walk along the beach for a ways and then Ambrose grabs me by the arm.

"Sh-h-h-h, Muley," he says. "Maybe we are in Begium and there is Boche here. Duck around the corner of this old bathhouse."

We do that, and we hear a voice:

"We still got two hours of leave from the tub, mademoiselles. It is a warm night to go swimmin'. Rawther. You ladies go and get into your suits and the lieutenant and I will do the same."

"Oo-la-la," a dame says.

"Sh-h-h-h-h-h," Ambrose says.

"They are Navy officers as look at the stripes. We will get their uniforms and steal a boat as Bagby is off shore even now."

"I won't listen to you," I says.

"Stay there, then," Ambrose snaps.

"I will be a lone wolf."

"And you won't need a bit of disguise, either," I counter. "You even have points on your ears."

It is a terrible thing the influence Ambrose has on me. It will kill me yet. We wait until the officers and the dames go splashing into the surf and then Ambrose heads for a boat-house with me after him. We find the Navy uniforms and put them on.

"It is nice gettin' into dry things, isn't it, Muley? Brass buttons and stripes and blue suits. 'We're in the Nave-e-e now, we ain't behind no plow. We won't never get rich with a four-year hitch — we're in the nave-e-e-e—'"

"Shut up or I will hit you with this anchor here," I says. "Do you want the Allies to know we're in the Navy? We joined the Air Corps, remember? This suit fits a little too late, Ambrose. What am I, an admiral?"

"Boys, what monkey suits, Muley. Who would join a navy?"

"We would," I says. "I can smell a basteel now. And I even git seasick lookin' at pictures of the ocean. Oh, I wish I'd never . . ."

Fifteen minutes later me and Ambrose are walking right into Calais and our helmets and goggles are crammed into our pockets. Ambrose says wait as he wants to make sure he

has the package of Smearo. When he finds out he has, a motorcycle almost runs us down and out of the bathtub tumbles a Navy officer who says it is about time we got back.

"We are cooked, Amb—"

"Shut up. Er-yessir," Ambrose says to the three striper. "Ship ahoy and aye aye. We got detained, sir. We—"

"Get in a taxi and follow me," the guy says.

"We will order the cabby to try and make Paree in an hour," I whispers to Ambrose. "We will shake the fathead an'—"

"Nothin' doin'," Ambrose says. "I have a hunch, Muley. I got under the light back there and there is wings on your hat. They was flyers down there. Where there is wings on a suit there is a plane close by, Muley. Let's obey orders."

"There is rats in brigs," I groan. "But go on, Ambrose."

WE GO to the waterfront and enter a big brick building that is full of big officers and they are wearing enough gold on them to satisfy a pirate. There is a big admiral or worse sitting at a desk and he looks like he has been through the battle of Manila Bay ten times.

"So you finally got here, you two," he growls. "Leftenants Hatcher and Briggs, huh?"

"Briggs," I gulp and Ambrose steps on my foot. Ambrose says that is who we are and that we are sorry if we held anything up.

"You know your job. There'll be medals if you pop that Boche raider. It sank the *Pride of Perth* two hours ago. We must get that boat, gentlemen. You'll have an obs. fighter with a couple of bombs under your pants. Now there's a steamer heading out to sea right now loaded up with red tabs and high-ranking Naval officers and we must protect it. Report to C wharf, Commander Eddystone. Hop to it!"

We salute and go out. On the way to the dock, I tell Ambrose that we are impersonatin' officers and will get twenty years if we don't get killed.

"Always a pessimist, Muley. We are officers, ain't we? Any lawyer could win our case. If certain officers go swimmin' instead of doin' their duties,

somebody has to take over for the Allies. We will be heroes, Muley."

"How much do you know about a seaplane?" I says nastily.

"As much as you, Muley. You know I can handle anything that wears wings."

"I am anxious to see how you will handle a dame who is an angel, then," I snap. "That is, the only kind of dame you will ever meet again. You got me into this, you homely . . . !"

We arrive at the dock and walk down some steps and onto a float beside which an obs. is moored. There is a Lewis in the rear pit and two guns up front. Some burly citizens are putting bombs under the crate's breadbasket.

The commander shakes hands with us and says we are the type to get the raider. He wishes us luck and Ambrose goes into the cockpit and I take the back seat as usual. The prop starts churning and the gobs take the ropes away.

"Two to one you will pile up, Ambrose Hooley," I says. "Don't forget this has no wheels on it." I duck down in the office and wait for the worst. I feel the power plant trying to tear itself loose as Ambrose gives it too much juice. The obs. bucks and pitches and rolls and then it starts across the water like a turkey just learning to swim.

"Pull back on the stick," I yowl. "This is not a motorboat. Oh, you crackpot! I—*glub!*" I swallow four quarts of brine and duck down again. I don't stick my dome up until Ambrose is up to two thousand feet and flying like he had been born inside the obs. All of a sudden I hear two loud sounds and they was not made by a pair of frogs in a swamp. I look down and see water spouting up.

"There is nothing down there!" I screech at Ambrose. "Then why did you drop the bombs?"

"It was a mistake, Muley. I pulled a lever and—"

"That is nice. If we meet the *Plying Dutchman* I will throw rocks at it if I have rocks. Get down lower and if we see the raider we will machine-gun it. Maybe we will kill the admiral of it. Ambrose Hooley, you should have died of your first case of colic."

AMBROSE takes the obs. down so low I could have scooped up a mackerel with my right hand. The prop starts kicking white caps off the top of the waves and they keep hitting me in the face. I grab at Ambrose Hooley's shoulder and remind him we are not operating a pig-boat.

"You said to git down low," Ambrose yelps. "Make up your mind." He goes up to a thousand feet and starts circling. Then he pulls something out of the side of the pit and I see they are binoculars. He leans over the side and squints through them.

"It is a steamboat, Muley. Let's go down and pepper the sides off of it."

"How do you know it is not a Allied ship?" I roar back."

"Maybe I should go down and land on the poop deck and ask for the papers," Ambrose snorts back. "Any-way, I saw a guy on the deck eatin' a chunk of sausage, Muley. If it fires on us, it is a Kraut, huh?"

We go down and the ship starts firing at us. A bullet chugs through the obs., bounces off the Lewis and goes singing into space. Ambrose sidesteps and I start sweeping the deck of the Boche boat with the Lewis gun.

Ambrose gets down so low, I could see a wart on the face of a sailor and the left wing-tip gets scorched by the sparks coming out of the funnel.

All at once the obs. goes haywire and I see Ambrose holding onto his dome. It looks like a slug has nudged him and I try and find the dual control stick but it is not in the slot. I get ready to meet mermaids just as the obs. goes into a loop. When we get right side up again, Ambrose is back to work as you have to hit him with nothing less than a Frog Seventy-five to get a ten count over him.

Then I hear the big explosion and I look down. The Kraut tub is half out of the water like a whale that has been harpooned and smoke and fire is belching from its innards. Wreckage makes splashes all over the channel and there is a hundred Boche gobs getting baths.

"What happened, Ambrose?" I howl at him. "You didn't have no bombs!"

"It beats me, Muley. But don't you dare say we didn't, as we are heroes. Maybe they was makin' home brew on

board and a batch got too much yeast. Say, somethin' is wrong with this wagon, Muley. There is another steamship over there. See? Maybe we attacked the wrong one, huh? Hang on as we have got to land. I happened to think that we lost a pontoon takin' off so—"

"If you think of anything worse, call me," I choke out and I slide back into the office and hold my dome in my hands. We hit hard like when a tank sideswipes a pillbox, and there is a ripping and tearing and a lot of smoke and hot ashes.

I says I have gone west and wait for the guy with the pitchfork to assign me to a Nissen near the furnaces. Then I fall out of the obs. and bounce against a big stick of wood. From that I go into what seems like a big barrel and I land on something soft. The soft thing starts swearing and throwing punches at me.

"Where am I?" I yelp.

"In the crow's nest, you swab!" a guy grunts. "A devil of a place for an aviator to be. Git off my face or I will claw your leg to the bone."

"Don't kid me," I tells the guy. "No crow could carry a barrel up this tree. Where's Ambrose?"

"Who?" a guy says and lifts me up. He is a gob with a face as hard as a teakwood stump.

Then I look down and get dizzy as I was on a ship. Then I see what was left of the obs. wedged between a smoke-stack and the bridge and half the Navy was trying to pull it loose.

"Poor Ambrose," I says. "If he went into the boilers—"

SOMETHING gets loose from the wreck of the seaplane and he has got a life preserver around his neck and a joystick clutched in his hand. He looks like an end man in a minstrel and he starts waving the joystick around like the symphony orchestra is in front of him. It is Ambrose Hooley.

"Well, I'll be!" I yells. "He cheated a graveyard again. How do I git down from here?"

They showed me a ladder and I nearly break my neck twice getting to the deck. Who has Ambrose by the collar but Major Bagby.

"Tell me, Hooley!" Bagby says. "How did you git in the Navy Air Force, hah?"

"Let go of me," Ambrose says in a thick voice. "We will make millions. Smearo is the greatest invention of the age. It will resol-revolusen—rev—it'll—who stole it? Oh, Mul-l-ley!"

"Here I am," I says and Bagby almost faints.

"You too, Spink? Well, of all the—"

"Look, here is your family tree," I says. "You took the wrong papers with you, Major. We risked life and limb savin' Witherin' Heights and sunk a boat with—what was it, Ambrose?"

"I am not sure, Muley. I know that after the obs. looped and I come out of gettin' smacked by a Heinie bullet, I did not have the package with me. Do you suppose it fell out and went down the smokestack of the *Plying Dutchman*, Muley? Oh, don't look at me that way as I am as sane as you."

"Then I am sorry for you," I groan and sit down on the deck and try to think.

"Now look here, Major," the skipper of the Channel boat says as big brass hats and admirals and things crowd around us. "You say they are from your squadron? How come they are wearing Navy uniforms, huh?"

"They can explain," Bagby says. "I hope."

There is no better liar living than Ambrose Hooley. If he ever found out he told the truth some place he would walk back and change it into a lie, even if it was a hundred miles away.

"We had a forced landing in the ocean near Calais," Ambrose says, wiping soot off his pan. "We met up with two—er—officers who had two dames and too much cognac and they told us what they was supposed to do. Seein' they was in no shape to go on such an important mission, me and Muley decided to sub for them and save Allied shippin'. Did we sink the raider?"

"You did," the skipper says. "One bomb hit it dead center. Amazing marksmanship, Lieutenant."

"It was, wasn't it?" I asks.

"You'll certainly get what is coming to you," Bagby says.

"I was afraid of that," I gulp. "Who has some cognac?"

Major Bagby fumbles the envelope Ambrose hands him and it breaks open and some papers fall out. An English officer picks it up and then looks at it like it was a skin off a cobra. "Thropmorton, Thropmorton, Puddlesford and Throp—" the Limey says. "Say, they were jolly well arrested three days ago and are locked up in jail. They write to you, Major?"

"Why, of course," Bagby says. "But it is none of your business, sir!"

"On the contrary, old boy. They were swindlers. Hooked you, pulled your leg, what? They get a chap in their office and ask him to advance a thousand pounds or so to help clear up certain entanglements like heirs who think they have a claim to the estate. Oh, this is priceless. My cousin Cyril was a victim of these jolly old rascals and—"

"Just let me sit down, gentlemen," Major Bagby gulps.

"Me, too," I says. "You can't trust nobody, can you, Ambrose?"

"All is lost," Bagby says. "Somebody loan me a gun."

"Oh, you would not have liked bein' a lord," Ambrose consoles the C.O. "A major is better as look what your squadron did. Why, three navies couldn't. If you had not been took for a sucker, me and Muley Spink would not have flown to the Channel and licked the Heinie raider. If you could trust people, we would never have been heroes. That reminds me—Uncle Willie was in on this, too. We must talk it over, Muley."

WE GO to London and the First Lord of the Admiralty shakes hands with Major Bagby and me and Ambrose, and while he does it, the Prince of Wales watches. The heir to the British throne offers Ambrose his hand and then is sorry as Ambrose breaks the royal citizen's index finger. We stay in England for ten days while they strike off some medals.

"What did Uncle Willie have to do with it?" Bagby says when we sail back across the Channel. "I remember you said—"

"Time will tell," Ambrose says.

(Continued on page 74)

The Air Transport Command

By **BRIG. GEN. HAROLD L. GEORGE**

*Commanding General, The Air Transport Command,
Army Air Forces*

THE present war differs from all previous conflicts in its truly global character and the pre-eminence of air power. Operations of the opposing forces embrace the six continents, four oceans and seven seas in their daily communiques. Despite the magnitude of the forces involved on land and sea, air power has emerged as the key to victory.

In a war of this character, battle lines are stretched around the world. Here at home, we are building up the arsenal of Democracy to supply them. The link between is the vital service of supply. And as operations on the battlefronts have been speeded up by the rising factor of air power, the service of supply must take to the air to keep pace.

The Air Transport Command functions to translate factory production into combat air units along the ever shifting theatres of operation. We might describe the Command as an aerial service of supply.

December 7 left the Command with the responsibility of delivering all military aircraft to be produced under the President's program of 60,000 planes in 1942, 125,000 in 1943. Since that date the Command has plunged headlong into other vital aspects of war—aerial delivery of equipment and personnel.

*Above the Arctic and Below the
Equator*

In accomplishing its huge job truly prodigious feats of daring and skill

are being performed by The Air Transport Command. New routes have been blazed above the Arctic Circle and below the Equator. With few detailed maps and haphazard weather in-

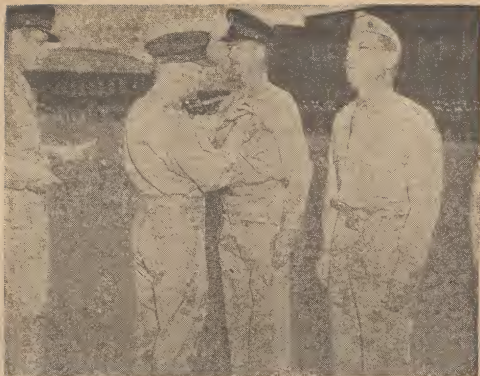


*Official photo, U. S. Army Air Forces
Brig. Gen. Harold L. George*

formation, planes have been flown around the world.

A globe circling series of bases have had to be established and a special network of communications set up to provide the daily information without which regular operations could not be

The Story of the Men Who "Deliver



Official photo, U. S. Army Air Force

Brigadier General George decorating men of the Air Transport Command

maintained. Equipment ranging from blankets and strawberry jam to prefabricated houses had to be brought in by ship and plane. With native labor, to which modern construction methods meant nothing, landing fields had to be enlarged and runways extended.

The War Department has announced that our pilots recently evacuated more than 4,000 persons from Burma. The Command also played an important rôle in the Battle of the Philippines. Even after the fall of Bataan our planes made two hazardous trips to the Philippines. On the first trip 25 persons were evacuated. On the second, just before Corrigedor fell, 30 evacuees were flown out on a plane carrying a total of 37 men, packed in like sardines. The navigator practically had to stand on three of the passengers to take his fixes.

Express to Australia

Not long ago the Command was notified that several thousand pounds

of essential military supplies were needed as soon as possible at a base in Eastern Australia. Two days and 14 hours after these supplies were made available to us on the coast, we had them delivered in Australia. During this flight the crew spent only seven hours on the ground, all for servicing. Meals and snatches of sleep were caught in flight.

When a badly needed military hospital burned to the ground in a remote section of Alaska, the Command was notified. Thirty-six hours later a 24-bed emergency hospital was set up and in operation with materials and supplies ferried by the Command.

Pilots and crews have experienced difficulties of all kinds and descriptions—ice in the Arctic, storms and St. Elmo's fire that burned holes in wings and fuselage in the South Atlantic, Japanese planes in the Far East.

The exploits of our airmen breathe life into the formalized phrases of

the Goods" to Save Democracy's Cause!

official citations made for "extraordinary achievement", and give new meaning to the stereotyped wording: "not only reflects credit upon himself, but upon his organization, all of the Army Air Forces and his country as well."

Landing at a foreign airport surrounded by barrage balloons with the ceiling zero is such an exploit. Flying at 22,000 feet over a cloud bank for hours until the oxygen supply was nearly exhausted is another. Bringing in a plane safely over a northern route after an encounter with a cold bank that within a few minutes deposited more than a ton of ice on the wings is a third.

There is the crew of a plane which took off from Java during the early days of the war to bring out the ground crews of a bomber squadron withdrawn from the Philippines. With enough gasoline for only 2,000 miles, the plane successfully completed an 1,800-mile flight at night through the hostile territory, changing course five times with only the stars as a guide, so that the slightest miscalculation would have meant failure, with death or capture by the enemy their probable fate. The thrill that ran through the crew can only be imagined as their signal for a landing was answered by a flare from the utter blackness below. But the ground crews so badly needed in Java were brought out "according to plan".

At one base in Africa, the crew brought in a four-motored plane without any advance communication with a field because the radio station was closed and the operator was away attending a festival.

Difficulties on Foreign Routes

Establishment of our foreign routes raised many new problems, all complicated by the factor of distance. Sanitation in many places simply did not exist. Anti-toxins merely helped in the battle of prevention.

The whole question of food for such diverse climates as those of Greenland and mid-Africa, India and China had to be examined. Seeds are now being sent out to detachments in far-off places so our men will have the familiar taste of home-grown carrots,

lima beans, onions and pumpkins to assuage homesickness as well as hunger.

Frostbite and mosquitoes are only two of the myriad enemies it is necessary to guard against in order to keep the officers and men maintaining our bases in the health and spirits vital to continuous operations. Refrigerators, radios, phonographs, baseball, badminton and other athletic equipment have been enlisted in the cause.

Some of these difficulties are on the lighter side. Ferrying one type of pursuit ship means limiting baggage to a toothbrush and razor. With crews constantly on the move, laundry still is a chronic problem. There is the case of the pilot whose fiancée spent almost three weeks waiting at the airport before he could stop long enough to get a marriage license and have the ceremony performed.

Yet, while daily problems were being solved, an eye had to be kept to the future when the full stream of production would be flowing over the airplanes to American squadrons and to our allies' forces everywhere.

Without the aid of existing commercial companies in a score or more fields, this gigantic task could not have been successfully accomplished. Airlines, oil companies, manufacturers and scores of individuals volunteered their services. They are still helping to perform vital functions in a setup that already has exceeded in scope the operations of all the civil airlines in the United States combined, and that in the near future will surpass those of the entire world.

History of the Command

Miraculous as some of the accomplishments of the Air Transport Command have seemed in the past, more miracles must be performed in the future before the war in the air can be won. There can be no resting on laurels, no pausing for breath until we deliver the bomber that levels the last Axis base to the ground.

Fortunately for us, the Air Transport Command had the benefit of a relatively natural growth, although the nature of its work has made pioneering the rule rather than the exception.

Created in June, 1941, by direction of President Roosevelt to speed up aircraft deliveries to the British under the Lease-Lend Act, its task was later extended by international developments to include deliveries to such other Lease-Lend beneficiaries as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the Netherlands East Indies, China and other South American countries.

Starting with an original complement of two officers and one civilian secretary, the Command has grown within ten crowded months into an organization of several thousand officers, enlisted men and civilian employees. From the beginning, questions arose for which precedent could

years ago we spoke of states, speak of oceans and seas as once we talked of rivers and bays.

The Training Program

A natural by-product of this vast organization is the training program, only recently instituted, to keep our pilot strength ample for the task of ferrying thousands of airplanes a month, varying in size from the small "grasshopper" craft used for artillery spotting and ground liaison to the huge Consolidated B-24s and Boeing Flying Fortresses.

Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, almost all our pilots were military flyers. The sudden demand for their

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furnish an answer because there were no precedents.

The organization which has been evolved to carry out President Roosevelt's program follows traditional lines in many respects, yet allows for infinite variations. It consists in broad outline of a Headquarters, and a Domestic and a Foreign Wing.

The Domestic Wing ferries all military aircraft from factories to points within the continental limits of the United States. At the East and West Coasts, planes consigned to foreign nations are turned over to the Foreign Wing, which flies them across to fronts in the Near and Far East, Australia and the U. S. S. R. I well remember the time when our thinking was confined to Hemisphere defense. Today we speak of countries as a few

services for combat units led to employment of civilian pilots on civil service status.

Plans call for eventually militarizing the entire service by commissioning these civilians as soon as they can qualify. The Domestic Wing already has set up officer candidate courses at control centers throughout the country to give intensive training designed to fit these civilian ferry pilots for commissions in accordance with their age and experience.

These courses are conducted during the 90-day civil service appointment so that ferrying operations are interrupted only for a short period and by small groups at each sector.

The whole Air Transport Command establishment, as a matter of fact, has a training as well as an operational

function. Pilots with lesser amounts of flying time start out on smaller types of planes, progress to the faster and heavier types.

After undergoing training at our 4-engine school, pilots may be transferred to the Foreign Wing, where they fly bigger, faster craft on longer missions. From the Foreign Wings, they are available for transfer to combat units, where their experience and training is invaluable for long range bomber flights.

To develop pilots and crews for the announced program of 500 heavy bombers a month will challenge our best efforts.

Conduct of operations on the present unprecedented scale has offered a new experience in organization. Since The Air Transport Command takes every military plane from the end of the assembly line, a sensitive finger must be kept on the pulse of production to eliminate any delays there.

From our control centers, pilots and crews are sent to the factory to take over each plane accepted by the Materiel Command inspector and fly it to a particular destination. Their progress is plotted almost hourly along the route so that information is avail-

able immediately as to the location, route and condition of any plane at any time.

When a plane is delivered, the crews are returned by air to their home control point or to another factory to repeat the process and keep the stream of production flowing smoothly.

The Air Transport Command looks to the future with confidence. Ahead lies a task that a few years ago would have appeared insurmountable. Yet we are now delivering more planes each month than the Army Air Corps possessed a few years ago.

At home the feeling that we are responsible in however small measure for the successful accomplishment of some war task should inspire us to greater efforts. On the battlefield, a sense of representing home and country, the millions of individuals making up this great nation, nerves our crews to fight the overwhelming loneliness of vast ocean or desert wastes, and steels the pilot, navigator, radio-man, gunner and bombardier when the enemy is sighted. In this reciprocity of spirit will be forged the attainment of our common goal, "Winning the War."

SEA SLICK

(Concluded from page 69)

When we get back to Commercy, Major Bagby fires Bugeye and says he guessed Bugeye was not C.O. material after all and you can't make a silk stocking out of an elephant's trunk.

Ambrose finds a letter in the Nissen marked URGENT. He sits down and opens it. "Listen, Muley," he says. "I thought so." And he reads the letter:

Dear Nephew:

I hope this reaches you in time to prevent a terrible accident. It was because of my stigmatism it happened. I tied up the wrong sticks in the package as what you got was the dynamite I was goin' to blow

up that old stump in the back yard with. I will send you the combination shoe freshener and shaving stick in a few days. The new glasses cost me eighteen dollars. Have you got eighteen you could spare?

As ever, your loving uncle,

"Maybe I will send him the medal I am goin' to git, Muley," Ambrose says. "Seein' as how I have not got eighteen dollars. Uncle Willie is a hero, un-honored and unsung."

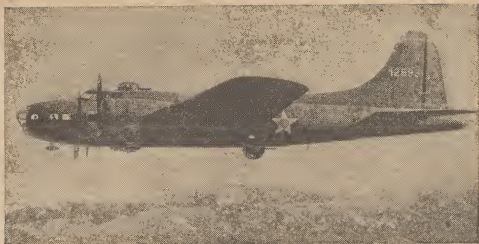
"You mean unhung, don't you?" I quip.

This time Ambrose did not get mad at me.

Next Issue: Hooley has his hands full when Muley begins raising money for Uncle Willie's flying gas tank invention in

FRANCS AND SAUERKRAUT, Another

Howler by **JOE ARCHIBALD**



Official Photographs, U. S. Army Air Corps
The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress

"OLE MISS" GOES TO JAVA

By **CAPTAIN AL KEY**
U. S. Army Air Forces

Back in 1935 the Key brothers, Al and Fred, established a heavier-than-air endurance record by flying a low-powered Stinson monoplane, "Ole Miss," continuously for 653 hours and 34 minutes over their home town of Merri-dan, Miss.

On January first of this year, Captains Al and Fred Key of the Army Air Forces, piloting the most powerful long-range bombardment planes in the world, took off a few minutes apart from a Florida airfield. They had dubbed their ships "Ole Miss II" and "Ole Miss III." They were bound for Java.

The brothers, flying in the same squadron, bombed and fought the enemy all over the South Pacific until the evacuation to Australia. Fred stayed to carry on the fight from Australian bases. Al was ordered back home for combat instruction duties. At this writing he is stationed at Barksdale Field, La. His story adds another chapter to the story of that heroic handful of American airmen who waged the Battle of Java.—The Editor.

THE first stop in our flight to the Far East was to be the West Indies. I told the crew as we passed over Miami to take a good look down because it was going to be the last lighter town they would see. I was just joking at the time, but it turned out to be true.

The navigator said we would arrive at our destination in the West Indies at 2:05 P. M. We did, and my opinion of navigators rose a hundred per cent right then and there.

It was this man's first long-distance trip as a navigator, too.

Some time later on, over water and headed for Africa, the navigator called me on the phone system and said:

"Captain, you've passed the point of return."

That meant that we were out too far to turn back, even if we had wanted to. Just then a storm struck and we flew on instruments for almost an hour.

As the weather cleared I got a call on the radio. It was Fred.

"Al, where in all creation are you?" he asked.

Into the Cloud

That was a fine question to ask a man who is right out in the middle of the ocean. I thought a second.

"You see that cumulous cloud ahead?"

I asked. "Well, I'm just going into it,"

"I'll be darned," Fred said. "So am I."

I looked out and saw Fred's plane right on my wing. We hadn't moved a hundred feet apart.

As it turned out, our ship was delayed due to engine trouble, and when we landed in Java, Fred was on hand to greet us. He already had been bombing the Japs, who at that time were advancing on the Indies.

I was a little shaken up from the flight across the Indian Ocean, but the commanding officer informed me that I would go on my first bombing mission the next morning.

I didn't sleep a wink that night.

Take-off came next morning before daylight, and we found the Japs at Macassar Straits. We dropped our bombs and on the way back were jumped by pursuits. We were flying the first B-17Es that the Japs had come up against and they didn't know we had those stingers in the tail.

We managed to shoot down everything that attacked us. Fred's plane was shot up pretty badly, but he was not hurt, nor was his crew.

And Still They Came

American flyers kept shuttling back and forth from Java for about ten days. But no matter how many Japs were killed they kept coming.

Next the Japs started on the Celebes and the Dutch set fire to the oil wells on those islands. One night the Dutch reported that the Japs were attacking and that the light from the burning oil wells would serve as a good beacon.

Three flights of us took off that night, and

the Japs were right where the Dutch said they would be. Fred, Lieutenant Hillhouse and I were in one flight. I told the other two to fly around, and I would see if I could stir up some trouble.

We "sashayed" around and let go some bombs. Then the Japs turned on their floodlights.

Fred hadn't cut off his radio, and I could hear him giving orders to "Soupy," his bombardier. The bombardier's name was Campbell, so Fred nicknamed him Soupy.

Then the Lights Went Out

"Soupy," said Fred, "you see those lights down there? Well, put 'em out."

A few seconds later I heard Soupy say: "Captain, they ought to go out soon. There's eight bombs on the way down."

The lights went out.

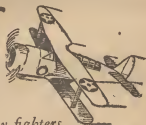
When the Japs started moving in on Sumatra, a squadron of American flyers caught thousands of them in small barges in some of the narrow straits. The Americans dropped bombs from 1,500 feet and blew Japs, barges and water almost as high as the planes.

But the Japs kept coming. And since American and Dutch flyers had to take time to refuel and service their planes, the Japs could get considerable troops through.

After Sumatra came Bali. Americans sank sixteen Jap ships at Bali. In one raid we destroyed an airfield which had fallen to Jap troops, together with a number of Jap planes. Then, when it became certain that the Indies could not be held, the evacuation to Australia began.



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Suddenly a queer pain
shot through Rickey's
head



ACES WITHOUT WINGS

By LEW MARTIN

The C.O. of the Twenty-seventh Attack Squadron knew his guns and planes—and wouldn't take orders from a Medico!

MAJOR "Hank" Rickey, Commanding Officer of the Twenty-seventh Attack Squadron, U.S.A.A.F., located on the outskirts of Yungning, China, mopped his glistening face with a sheet-sized bandanna and leaned back in his desk chair.

"I've been around, and plenty," he

grunted, "but this heat tops anything and everything. Man, it's hot enough to melt the hub right off the prop boss!"

Captain Smart, who was adjutant, best friend and rear gunner for Rickey, looked up from a mess of papers with a grin.

"Hot?" he echoed. "What are you

going to do when summer comes, Hank? And speaking of summer, have you thought any more about that hinted offer of that job at G.H.Q. with colonel's rank and pay? You could do with a nice vacation, Hank."

Rickey's brows came together to form a solid black line, and there were tiny specks of fire in his steel gray eyes.

"Do I catch a note of eagerness to get rid of me?" he demanded. "A desk job at G.H.Q., huh? Not in a million years, my boy. Not while there's a front line and Japs on the other side of it."

"There'll be a front line for quite a while to come, yet, Hank," Smart murmured. "And you've been pushing it pretty hard. Not that you aren't as good as you ever were, but—"

"But—nuts!" Rickey snapped. "When I figure that I'm no longer any good, then I'll quit. I cut my eyeteeth on an airplane. I learned to smoke in one. And I learned to drink in one. Don't worry! I know what I can do and what I can't do. So change the subject!"

"Okay," said Smart with a faint grin. He tapped a paper he held in his hands. "We're getting a new medico. Flight Surgeons, they call them now."

"A new one?" Rickey echoed sharply. "What's wrong with Doc Withers? He's been out here in China for ten years. Knows this country, and what you can catch from it like a book. That's official?"

"Signed, sealed and all the rest of it," Smart replied with a nod. "A Lieutenant Digger—G.H.Q. says we can expect him today."

"Digger, huh?" Rickey growled. "Nice name for an undertaker. Okay, he can arrive. But if he's got a lot of new and fancy ideas about pink pills and castor oil—"

RICKEY let the rest slide, emphasized it with a curt nod of his close-cropped head. Smart grinned and felt a little sorry for Lieutenant Digger, whoever he was. Major Rickey was one of the old school who had been able to step right into the new school and keep pace with the best of them.

He knew his airplanes and guns like

nobody's business. He had proved that in the Philippines and in Java. He was continuing to prove it as C.O. of a squadron on the China Front. He was good, all right, but there was one thing he couldn't take. As he termed it— "This new fangled fuss and feathers business."

Were he stationed in the States he would have been over his head in boiling water long ago. But he was way out in China, and red tape and rules and regulations hadn't reached that far yet. But Smart knew that they would sooner or later. And so he felt a little sorry for his old friend.

"Well, I hope he's a good poker player, anyway," he said. "I could do with a little competition. I feel like a bandit with you birds."

"You are a bandit!" Rickey growled. "Why last night—"

He didn't finish. At that moment came the sound of a plane outside. They both got up and went over to the office window. A twin-engined bomber was just starting to slide down for a landing. It was a bomber right enough, but it contained the two bands of white about the fuselage near the tail to mark it as a Headquarters ship.

"That must be Lieutenant Digger arriving, now," Smart murmured. "And in case you're worrying, Hank, Doc Withers knows about the change. He got his orders this morning. I think he's kind of glad to be going back to Base at Chungking."

"I'm glad for him," Rickey grunted and squinted at the landing plane. "He's had enough of it out here. Besides, Doc's no chicken. Well, let's go see who it is—and make him feel at home."

They went out of the office and across the dusty sun-baked drome to where the twin-engine job was taxiing up to the line. When the props stopped turning over, the side door opened, and a youth in shoes, shorts and shirt stepped onto the ground. He saw Major Rickey instantly. A smile flashed across his tanned face, and he raised his hand in salute to the edge of his pith helmet.

"Major Rickey?" he said. "I'm Lieutenant Digger, reporting for Flight Surgeon duty."

A combination of emotions raced through Rickey as he took the salute and extended his hand. He almost had the feeling that he was shaking hands with his son—if he'd had a son.

Young Digger wasn't a day over twenty-five by his looks. As a matter of fact, he looked even younger. He was of medium build, average height and so forth. But his tanned face still seemed to show some of the original baby pink complexion, and he wore thin gold-rimmed glasses.

"Welcome to the hottest corner of the world, Digger," Rickey said warmly. "Must have been a warm trip. Come on over to the mess and have something tall and cool."

"In a half hour, if I may, sir," the young flight surgeon reported. "First, though, could you detail some men to give me a hand? I have some equipment aboard, and the pilot is supposed to return to G.H.Q. at once."

Rickey frowned, then shrugged.

"Okay," he said. "This is Captain Smart, adjutant, and most everything else around here. He'll give you a hand, and bring you over to the mess when you get through. Welcome again, Digger."

RICKEY nodded at Smart, then turned on his heel and hurried away. He didn't know just why he hurried, but he did. He suddenly wanted to get away from young Digger. There was something about the kid that he couldn't fathom. It gave him a queer feeling inside. And it made him mad that he couldn't accurately analyze the feeling.

It was almost two hours later when Smart came into the mess alone. He was smiling, but he was also trying very hard to suppress the smile. A little bell rang in Rickey's head, and he gave him a hard stare.

"Okay!" he grunted. "What's the latest dirty story from G.H.Q.?"

"It's perfectly clean," Smart said, dropping into a chair. "And I don't think you'll think it's funny. Young Digger has brought along enough equipment to start up a small base hospital. I couldn't even recognize half of it. He said it was apparatus to be used for the weekly check-test."

"Weekly check-test!" Rickey ex-

ploded. "What in thunder are you talking about?"

"Just what I said," Smart replied. "A new ruling. All pilots and observer-gunnery are to be check-tested once a week, and every week. A flight surgeon like Digger is to be assigned to every front-line squadron from here to Iceland, and back. Frankly, I think it's a good idea."

"Oh, you do, do you?" Rickey snarled. "So the idea is to knock the Japs on their ears with trick gadgets and pill bottles?"

"No, not exactly," Smart said gravely. "But the Japs will be able to knock us on our ears *less* if we're in good shape every time we go after them."

"Who says we're not in good shape?" Rickey demanded.

"Nobody, and keep your shirt on," Smart soothed. "That'll be Digger's job. And, speaking of Digger, here he comes in the flesh. Go easy with him, Hank. He's new, and only just arrived."

Rickey didn't say anything. He just made sounds in his throat and watched the young flight surgeon come in through the door. He waved the youth over and pointed to a chair.

"Sit and relax, Digger," he said. "We go for lime and ginger out here, mostly. The harder stuff when we get leave. But, if you'd like?"

"Lime and ginger would be fine, sir, thank you," Digger said and mopped his face. "My gosh! Is it like this constantly?"

"This is the winter season," Rickey said with a grin. "Been in the Far East long?"

"Three weeks," came the startling reply. "Last month I was completing training at Hoover Base in California. Seems like years ago."

"Time flies in war," Rickey said. Then after waiting for the drink orderly to serve Digger his lime and ginger, "Captain Smart tells me you brought along quite a load of equipment. What's it all about?"

Young Digger looked faintly surprised.

"Why, it's nothing new, sir," he said. "Standard medical equipment for every air base. Apart from my regular duties, I have to check-test

every member of the flying personnel. Just a routine weekly examination to see that they are medically fit for flying duty."

"And, if they're not?" Rickey shot at him.

"Why, then I report it to you, sir," Digger said. "And you are to ground them until they are. Or, possibly, order their transfer to Base Hospital for treatment. And—would tomorrow morning be all right, sir?"

"All right for what?" Rickey wanted to know.

"My first check-tests, sir," was the reply. "I'd like to get started as soon as I can."

"Right!" Rickey snapped. "We're doing overhaul on the planes, so tomorrow morning will be fine. Arrange everything with Captain Smart. Well, I've got some paper work to tackle. Relax and make yourself at home, Digger. We'll be seeing more of each other."

For the second time in as many hours Rickey hurried away from the presence of young Flight Surgeon Digger. And for the second time he was mad at himself for not being able to discern why the youthful arrival gave him the shivers, made him feel just a little worried and not sure of everything.

"Don't be a sap!" he grated to himself. "If that kid starts messing up the routine, all I have to do is step on him. And that will be that! And *how* it will!"

He didn't see young Digger the rest of the day, for the new flight surgeon was too busy setting up things in his quarters. As a matter of fact, Rickey didn't see him until shortly after noon the following day when the youth came into the office with a mess of papers in his hand.

"Everybody's checked, sir, and okay," Digger said. "I've made out the reports. I'll sign them and send back copies just as soon as I've checked you, sir? Could you come over, now?"

Rickey stiffened and dropped the cigarette he was putting between his lips.

"Me?" he barked. "What are you talking about?"

"All members of the flying person-

nel must take the test, sir," Digger replied. "And that, of course, includes you. It's just a simple test, but very important. Of course, though—"

Young Digger paused and seemed to flounder for words.

"Of course, what?" Rickey snapped him up.

"Well, if you don't want to be checked, sir," the youth said slowly, "I can simply put it in my report that way."

For a crazy moment Rickey was tempted to tell the kid exactly what he could do with his report. But he killed the idea as quickly as it was born. He had been in the Service long enough to learn that the way to handle something you didn't like was to handle it and then forget about it. So he got up from the desk.

"Let's go," he said. But make it snappy, Digger. I've got some testing to do myself this afternoon—with planes."

FOR the next half hour, Rickey was grimly reminded of his annual medical some months before Pearl Harbor. Young Digger didn't have one-tenth the equipment that the Medical Board had had back at Bolling Field, but the kid seemed to be three times as intent on his job and that many times as thorough. The only thing he didn't do was to take Rickey apart bone by bone and put him back together again.

When he was all finished and looked at Rickey, there was a queer light in his eyes. It struck Rickey as a combination of fear and sadness.

"Well?" Rickey growled. "That all? Finished with me?"

Young Digger put down his chart and notes and chewed on his lower lip.

"No, sir," he said in a low tone. "I'm afraid that's not all. Fact is, sir—I guess you'll have to order yourself grounded. Your heart."

Rickey started up out of the chair he was sitting in, but quickly got control of himself and fixed Digger with an agate glare.

"What's that?" he bit off deliberately. "Ground myself? My heart? What the thunder's wrong with my heart?"

"Well—" Digger began, but Rickey stopped him.

"Never mind the twenty-dollar medical terms!" he snapped. "Put it in plain language. And make it brief."

"A slight strain, you could call it," Digger said quietly. "It—ever have a slight burning in your chest after high altitude patrols? And a slight headache, sir?"

Rickey started to deny it angrily, but there was something sincere in Digger's face and voice.

"Sure," Rickey admitted. "Who doesn't? We all do. It's the heat out here."

"Not in your case, sir," the young flight surgeon said quietly. "It's your heart. It's—well, in your language; it's been taking a pretty tough beating. Frankly, you stand the chance of blacking out long before any of the others in the squadron. Your heart wouldn't maintain the pumping pressure needed in a violent maneuver. And, particularly, pulling out of a dive.

"Believe me, sir, I'm not giving you personal guesses. I checked that part twice. The results were the same. And the test results don't lie, sir. They can't. The human factor in the medical examiner has nothing to do with it. I'm sorry, sir, but—well, you'll have to ground yourself. You're not medically fit for flight duty."

Simmering red rage slowly rose in Rickey.

"That's what you think, son!" he said between his teeth. "But I've been flying planes too long not to be able to spot the signs. And when I spot them, then I'll quit and go back to a desk job. Now I've got work to do. There happens to be a war on."

RICKEY got up and reached the door before Digger stopped him.

"Just a minute, sir!" And when Rickey had halted and turned, "I can't stop you, of course, sir. You're the commanding officer. But, you're simply asking for trouble. Not only as regards blacking out and killing yourself, but from G.H.Q. It's my duty to make a complete report.

"My report will be checked by the flight surgeon commandant, and he does have the authority to ground you.

Believe me, sir, I hate this as much as you do. But the test results are correct. The tests are as close to actual flight conditions as possibly can be."

Rickey hesitated, and a sudden thought came to him.

"Close, but *not* actual flight conditions," he said. "That heart test. Could it be made in a plane in flight? Can you make it?"

"Yes, sir," was the instant reply. "I only need a couple of my instruments. But you'd be strapped up a bit. In a plane, I could get a very definite test result."

"Okay!" Rickey snapped. "We have a two-seater trainer here we fool around with now and then. Get your stuff and meet me on the tarmac in half an hour. We'll just tootle around the field, easy like, and you can make your tests."

A funny light seeped into young Digger's eyes. Then it was gone, and he nodded.

"Right, sir," he said. "I'd like very much to make the test in the air. In half an hour, sir."

It was twenty-five minutes later when Rickey tooted the two-seater trainer off the ground and nosed it up toward the sun-seared China sky. He was flying from the front pit, and Digger was in the rear. Bands were wound about Rickey's chest and about the upper parts of his arms, and tubes led from them back to Digger's pit. There was a small watchlike affair pressed over the region of his heart and was held in place by the bands of rubbery stuff.

It all made him feel uncomfortable, but it didn't interfere with his flying in the least. As a matter of fact, he didn't mind it at all, as long as he could show that his condition in flight was one thing, and his condition surrounded by gadgets in Digger's quarters was something else.

So, with a tight grin on his lips and a great big song of certain hope in his heart, he went up away for altitude and then started coasting about over the field in a series of figure eights. Every now and then he made a real tight turn. And each time he came out of it he twisted his head and grinned questioningly back at Digger. But the young flight surgeon didn't see the

grins. If he did, he paid no attention to them. His face was expressionless, and his eyes remained fixed on the recording dials of the various gadgets he had brought along.

AFTER a good half hour of being regarded only as an experimental guinea pig, Rickey's patience began to run low, and the savage desire to *really* make the flight conditions actual took possession of him. Maybe a few fast ones would give the kid something to check.

This lazy-daisy stuff wasn't getting either of them here nor there. If it was to be a test, then he'd make it a real test and give young Digger some results that would shut him up for a while. Ground him, huh? Send him back to a desk job, and—hey! A thought!

Was all this just a gag? Was this the way General Blake back at G.H.Q. was working it to get him to turn over the squadron to somebody else and accept that colonel-desk job? He knew General Blake wouldn't yank him back against his will. So maybe he was pulling it this way? So-o-o?

Twisting around in the seat, Rickey attracted young Digger's attention, and then made whirling motions with one hand. He turned front again and started to slice up the China sky with the trainer. A song really was in his heart now, and there were pink clouds of joy all around him as he rolled, and whip-stalled, and whacked her this way and that.

But suddenly a queer pain shot through his head. It seemed to suck out all his brains and leave a contented emptiness. The pink clouds changed color. They turned a dirty gray, then black. He forced himself to strain his belly against the belt and lean way forward and get his head down as low as he could.

But something told him that he hadn't moved. He couldn't see, because it was getting darker with every passing split second. And he couldn't feel, because that sense seemed to have fled his body. But he couldn't just sit there. He had to do something.

He was blacking out, but not as he had ever blacked out before. This—well this was slower, but more certain.

He seemed to be slipping apart in sections—in small pieces, and—

* * * *

"You're okay now, sir," said a voice. "Breathe deep, and keep your head down."

He didn't keep his head down. He lifted it up and found himself staring into the face of young Digger. The flight surgeon was standing on the wing stub and leaning in over the cockpit. But what dumbfounded Rickey was the fact that the two-seater trainer was on the ground! It was on the ground, on the far side of Twenty-seven's field—and the prop was ticking over as nice as you please.

"My God!" he gasped. "Did I black out and actually land this thing? Land her blind?"

"No, sir," Digger said quietly. "You blacked out, but I landed the plane."

"You landed it?" Rickey gulped.

"You're—you're a pilot?"

"I had a civilian license before the war," Digger replied. "A little over a hundred hours. Tried to get into the Air Forces, but—"

The young flight surgeon smiled sadly and pointed at his glasses.

"My eyes," he said. "Good enough for a civilian license, but not up to Air Force standards. But, I had just hung out my M. D. shingle so I got into it this way. Not as nice as the flying end, but—well, it's a job that helps, and I guess that's the important thing."

Rickey stared at him and said nothing. But there were millions of thoughts in his head. Supposing this had happened on patrol with Smart in the gunner's pit? There were no dual controls in the gunner's pit, and Smart might not have known what had happened until it was too late to bale out. And—and thank God for this kid, Digger. Thank God, for the thousands like him that were coming along. Their job was to save lives. And name one thing *more* important in war!

"I won't say thanks, Digger," he finally murmured softly. "That would be an insult after what you've done for me today. I'll just say—well, we'll make it a hard drink for both of us, this time. And then I'll go get myself made a colonel—and flat-spin official papers and red tape all over the place."

A BUGLE CALL TO ACTION

By

MAJOR GENERAL BARTON K. YOUNT

Commanding General, Air Forces Flying Training Command



MAJOR GENERAL YOUNT

AIR POWER is WORLD POWER! The smashing successes of air actions in Europe and in the Far East clearly indicate that rulers of the air are apt to be rulers of the world! The fact is now being translated in terms of U. S. Army Air Forces, which both in planes and in manpower will surpass anything the world has ever seen.

The aircraft industry is now winning the battle of plane production. But to take the planes into the air we need a constantly increasing flow of carefully trained air crews—bombardiers, navigators, pilots, and aerial gunners, as well as competent ground crews.

To maintain a rapidly accelerating pilot-training program—from 500 per year in 1938 to 30,000 per year in 1942, every effort must be made to speed up training without reducing quality.

Flying is a science which is based largely on certain principles of physics and mathematics. The rigors of air combat require physical proficiency. The basic fundamentals of military aviation as well as the proper conditioning of the body can be taught effectively in our high schools.

The sooner we launch such training on a widespread scale the better our Nation's chances will be to win the war.

The United States will need hundreds of thousands of flying officers and men to win the war. This may mean a long continued project, but we must not forget that what we do within the next six months may determine whether we are to fight a two-year war or a ten-year war.

The rapidity with which we accomplish this gigantic task will be determined, to a considerable degree, by the success of the Pre-Aviation Cadet Training Program in enlarging the reservoir of competent young men who may become America's sky warriors of tomorrow.



FURTHER STUDY OF PROPELLERS

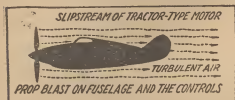
NOW that you American Eagles know how a propeller, or airscrew, works, and why, we will dig more deeply into this subject, and get the rest of the meat out of the shell.

Last time, we covered the pitch and thrust problems. So, now let us look into the effect of the size or diameter of a prop, and the effect it has on flight. And in considering the importance of the prop, we have to bear in mind that while the engine furnishes the power, all that power

crankshaft to which it was fastened. And you couldn't use one whose tensile strength was so low that when it started revolving fast it threw off its tip from centrifugal force like throwing mud off an auto wheel.

On the other hand, the larger the prop, the less effect will the fuselage have on it, and the larger the prop, the more air it will bite into. So we have two influences limiting the size, and two demanding as great a size as is possible.

The happy medium is usually expressed in having a prop whose diameter is about equal to its pitch, and its pitch in turn is governed by its power and the job it has to do with that power. Thus on a ship which is planned to advance in normal flight a distance of eight feet, we will generally find an eight-foot prop to be all right. However, there are variations of this for special purposes.



becomes active only through the action of the propeller, and the less efficient the prop, the more engine power is a dead loss.

Diameter of Prop

Now when we go to select a prop, we don't just grab one of any size or pattern, but we have several things to consider. The first thing to think about is the diameter, and this is not a matter of guess work. There are any number of things which have to govern the diameter of the prop we use. As, for instance:

The amount of clearance above the ground or water that we need to insure that the prop won't be damaged at the tips. You've seen plenty of prop tips twisted like the top of an opened sardine can when they came into contact with the ground, or water either, for that matter.

The strength of the blades against bending and against the great centrifugal force which is generated when they're revolving at great speed.

The size of the fuselage or other airfoil body directly behind the airscrew, and the action of the airscrew and slipstream from it on the body of the ship.

And the efficiency of the airscrew itself.

Now, it is clear that the amount of clearance from the ground needed, and the strength of the propeller set a definite limit on the size of the propeller to be used. You couldn't use a prop whose tip hit the ground at every revolution because there wasn't enough room between the ground and the

Number of Blades

There are also a lot of complications which control the number of blades a prop should have, and one of these, on ships where cost is an important item, is the cost of the prop, as we shall see. On Service ships, and liners, which can afford the best, that consideration is eliminated in favor of efficiency. But it is a big item nonetheless.

Airscrews may have two, three, or four blades, for various reasons. And the reason you see so many two-bladed ones is merely that they are a whole lot cheaper to make, and not at all because they are the best.

There are plenty of ships using two-bladed props where three or even four blades would be more efficient, if they weren't so much more expensive.

One of the deficiencies of a two-bladed job is concerned with stability. You will remember from the last lesson that we learned that the airscrew must set up a torque which just balances off the torque of the motor, otherwise the engine will race and become less efficient.

Achieving Balance

Since each blade of the prop contributes to the total amount of propeller torque set up, it follows that in cases where only a relatively small prop can be used on a strong motor, there would be a loss of power due to racing.

This loss of power could be overcome by using a three- or four-blade prop, which would offer more torque resistance and off-

(Continued on page 86)

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THE L. E. A. FLYING COURSE

(Continued from page 84)

set the engine torque. In most cases, a three-blade screw would be the ideal compromise, but here you have manufacturing difficulties in making the airscrew that runs its cost up tremendously.

You can get some idea of the difficulties when you stop to realize how perfectly the blades must balance, how precisely equal in weight, in distance apart, and how perfectly they must trail in each other's wake.

But that is not all the difficulty in making a perfect three-blade prop. In a two- or four-blade job, you have blades just opposite and balancing each other, but in a three-blade job, the blades are set at 120 degrees from each other and do not fall opposite each other, and this adds difficulties in achieving perfect balance.

And we are not through yet. How about the necessary variable pitch in props whose jobs need it? In order to change the pitch of a prop while in flight, you need machinery to do it, and some of this has to be built into the prop hub—without changing its perfect balance.

More than Just a "Stick"

Yes, amigos, a good propeller is more than just a "stick" as we like to call it, and it can't be bought for hay. The simple two-blade "sticks" will be around for a long time yet.

We also have to consider the height at which we expect maximum performance when deciding on our airscrew. As was mentioned before, the higher you go the less dense the air, and the density of the air which the prop has to cut has a big influence on its efficiency.

In the first place, the motor power does not remain constant as we gain altitude, unless we have a supercharged motor, and then since we have the same power but less density, our prop would race and we would be wasting power.

Here, again, we have to have a variable-pitch prop so that the thinner the air, the bigger bites the prop can take per revolution. That is, we must increase the pitch with the increase of altitude.

But suppose we have a plain vanilla, fixed-pitch propeller. If it had a pitch great enough to work well at high altitudes, the pitch would slow down the motor on account of its heavy load when we were at ground level, and if the pitch were sufficiently great, it could even interfere greatly with the ship's developing enough lift to take off.

Therefore, it is clear that if you are going in for altitude, and have your motor supercharged for this purpose, you face one of two conditions; you either have to have a variable pitch propeller, or else you have to get one with a pitch that is satisfactory for your high altitude, and accept its limitations which increase with the decrease in altitude of operation.

A still further consideration is that of

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altitude when you do not have a super-charger. In this case, we have already learned that there will be a progressive loss of power in our motor on account of the decrease in the amount of air we can get for our carburetor.

This decrease in power will eventually be enough to insure the propeller not racing, but it will express itself in a slowing



down of the number of revolutions of the motor, and a consequent loss of thrust.

When this happens, of course, we can't climb any higher with that motor in that ship. That is the ceiling of the ship.

Effect of Slipstream

Now comes consideration of the effect of the slipstream of the various propellers. It is that corkscrew of wind set up behind the propeller by its revolving blades, and the direction of the force of this stream is helical. It is something to be reckoned with.

We know that an airplane should have an even flow of air over and under its wings, without backwashes and eddies to cause

[Turn page]

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resistance. But the slipstream of a propeller is anything but an even flow of air. It is a pulsating, eddying, and turbulent air current, roughly considered as a cylinder of the diameter of the prop which causes it.

It flows backward from the prop, passes over the fuselage (in a single motor job), and over the tail surface. And it is twisting all the time, and not a smooth body of air like that through which the wings are passing.

A slipstream causes noises and vibration, and a considerable amount of wear and tear over those parts over which it passes. A slipstream is a nuisance, and has to be considered in building the ship.

On a pusher-type craft, this trouble doesn't exist, because the prop is behind the body of the ship, and the slipstream set up passes off harmlessly behind the ship, like the wake of a boat in the water. But in the tractor type, the craft is always in its own slipstream. Problems of design, however, keep the pusher-type from replacing the tractor.

The effect of the torque of the airscrew has to be taken into consideration when the ship is designed or assembled. We have learned that the torque will tend to rotate the complete airplane in the opposite direction to that of the rotation of the propeller itself.

Angle of Incidence

If we don't make some allowance for this tendency, find some manner of offsetting it, we would find our fuselage revolving one way while our propeller revolved another. Or more mildly, it would result in one wing always wanting to drop, while the other would tend to rise.

Now, to offset this, we "wash-out" on the side which tends to rise, and "wash-in" on the side which tends to drop. To wash out, means to decrease the angle of incidence of the wing from the norm to a point where it will not climb from a lateral balance.

We wash in the wing which inclines to drop by increasing the angle of incidence enough to make it keep up level with the wing that was washed out. Thus, by giving more climb to one, and less to the other wing, we offset this tendency of the propeller torque to make us revolve.

Other methods of counteracting this tendency are to give the ship unequal wing areas, and thus unequal lift enough to counteract it, or even to give the load an unequal distribution for the same reason.

In some racers, this has been handled by loading the fuel in unequal amounts on the two sides of the longitudinal axis.

And now, friends, you know that a stick is more than just a prop. It is the life of the ship!

—BRUCE McALESTER.

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AROUND THE HANGAR

(Continued from page 13)

we have got the mop wet. You should have seen the Tripe we shot down over Hill 987 in the last brawl if you think our tripe is a mess. As long as you like THE AMERICAN EAGLE, we should take offense! We'd like to see if a ceiling couldn't be put on you, though.

Herbert Felsted, 608 E. Walnut St., Bloomington, Ill., wants to know what our plans are going to be for the next few issues. Herb comes right out—all out:

Enclosed please find a stamped self-addressed envelope and three name-strips for which please send me a set of those World War I Aces pictures. Also please enroll me as a member of your club and a pen pal.

Now to get down to brass tacks. This is my first attempt to write you, and only a doublecrossing like you gave us World War I model plans fans made me do it. I have been patiently buying your mag the last three issues in the hopes that you'll have another World War I model in it, and I thought it was about time to write and see about it. I agree completely with Charles Cummings, whose letter you published in the Summer issue. A fellow can get plans for modern ships in every flying mag he picks up, but where can he get plans for oldtimers, huh? Let's see some more of them soon!

I also think you should keep Masters back in World War I. Masters ought to have a son or something to take over shooting Germans where the old man left off.

That just about gnaws my way through the bone, and tell Joe to keep Ambrose and Muley going.

If this should get printed and viewed by any prospective pen pals, I am sixteen, six feet tall, with brown hair and eyes, am a World War I aviation fanatic, and usually broke.

We'll try and satisfy you, Herb. Don't blame the old man, Masters. Maybe he got a daughter instead of a son and had to keep on working on the Krauts. There will be a meeting of model department heads in our office this P. M. if the mayor doesn't spring an air raid alarm on us. We have to put in for another stirrup pump as the creator of Ambrose dropped a cigar on the floor yesterday. Not even a jet of water could douse it and it burned right through the floor.

Off with you, Herbie, and let Earl Regan, 220 Douglas St., Wilmington, Ohio, have his say here. If you can waste gas here, Earl can. So:

I've been reading your magazine for a year now and think it is very good. About the best is the Jac Archibald stories.

In the Fall issue you had a solid model of the Bristol monoplane. Keep those World War I solid coming. They're swell! And say, how about some World War I machine guns? The ones on the plans are good, but how about some larger ones?

Enclosed is a name-strip from THE AMERICAN EAGLE and 15¢ in coin. Shoot the World War I pictures to me.

Your letter has been stamped *sample copy*, Earl. We have a mind to make photostatic copies of it and send it out to all the clients. A circular letter—which reminds us of the day we asked a new stenog to get one out for us. The little dope spent an hour with a pair of scissors

[Turn page]

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making a circular sheet of paper. But here is a long stint from a customer who has more hours in the air than we had in World War I. (And no cracks!)

Robert Wilkins, 28 Auburn St., Nashua, N. H., writes:

I have just finished reading your mag for the first time but not the last, I assure you. I found it very interesting. The main story was ANZAC WINGS. It shows the youth of today such as I and many others what is happening over there and too close to our U. S. A.

Now a few notes about myself so I won't be exactly a stranger to you fellas. Age, twenty-one; eyes, hazel; hair, brown; complexion, dark brown; weight, one hundred sixty-eight pounds; height, five feet eleven and one-half inches. I'm not exactly handsome but I'm not homely either. I have had two and a half years of flying and have for the last six months been training students here at our little airport. We have a quota of thirty-six pilots to put out every two months. I have twelve each month to train. I've got close to 3,000 hours solo to my credit. I'm going in the Army Air Corps the last of October.

I wouldn't have written, but I noticed a little item in your article, "Around the Hangar," written by one Fritz Duval. (What is he? You fellas name him and I'll gladly tell you what to feed him!) He calls your mag trash! Well, here's my little piece about his piece of trash you had to print because you are a real American.

Any one here in the U. S. A., man, woman or child, does not have to be in the least superhuman to out-do any Nazis or Jap beetle. Superior men, he calls them! As for the planes they have, give me my little Walker Trainer and a water pistol, and I'll take my chances against any of them. As for the fur flying this Spring, I will agree with John on that subject. Your great military machine is going into real action soon, and this time it will settle things forever, not for just twenty years like the last time.

Well, I guess I'd better close now, as I've written enough, but you'll hear from me again!

We pity the Luftwaffe when Bob gets over there, and we are not kidding. We had to cut out some of the lines, Bob, or other contributors would be left out this issue, and you wouldn't want that.

By this time, Fritz Duval will be watching his Steppe. Good luck with the air corps, Bob, and make sure you do write again. They come from all over—here is Laurence Collins, 316 North Long Street, Salisbury, N. C.

I have been reading THE AMERICAN EAGLE quite a while now, and I have enjoyed it very much. I enclose the name-strips from three mags, and a stamped envelope. Please rush my pictures. Don't let any of those drips get you down when they call you names. How about putting out this mag more often?

The ribbers are wasting their time trying to hurt our feelings, Larry. We had a C.O. in 1918 that made Simon Legree look like a panty waist and the boss we have got now—so the small fry think they can faze us? We have to laugh, Larry. Thanks for the boost in our morale.

Emmett Cooke, Box 292, Kenedy, Texas, sticks his neck out of his greenhouse and he had better look out that a WAAC or a WAVE doesn't slap him down. Let's see what's Cooke-ing:

I sure like your mags, especially THE AMERICAN EAGLE. It's sure a swell story. "The American Eagle," he sure knows his tricks. I also like AIR WAR, especially the CAPTAIN DANGER stories. I believe a few more air battles should be given. Not too much of that land stuff such as is in THE AMERICAN EAGLE. "Around the Hangar" is tops to me. It sure has

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some swell letters in it. I really enjoyed Fred-
erick Beck's letter. I believe he hit the nail square
on the head. If we let the girls have too much
influence, it will be a love story mag instead of a
war story mag. Women are nothing but trouble
makers.

Yeah! I believe that swap column was a great
thing. I think it should go on.

Keep us out of any arguments that have
to do with the distaff side. We do not
mind ack-ack or Molotov cocktails but
when you get dolls burning up—maybe
you'll be sorry we printed this and you
treat your mailbox with that OCD pump
and a bucket of sand before you open it
from now on. We'd hate to lose such a
satisfied customer, Cookie.

Let's have a couple, Flannelmouth, as
our space is getting more cramped here
than a squirt that has munched too many
green apples. Bob Portman, 221 E. Fulton
St., Butler, Pa., and Bob Davis, 761 Blake
Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y., team up here to
keep the consensus of opinion on our mag-
azine on the beam. These two new mem-
bers say:

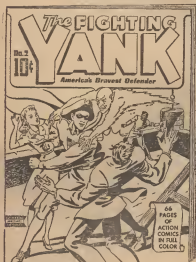
I have secured and read all four of your latest
issues of THE AMERICAN EAGLE, SKY FIGHT-
ERS, R.A.F. ACES and AIR WAR. They are all
swell, especially Lieut. Scott Morgan's stories, but
best of all are those by Joe Archibald.

I have clipped the coupons from SKY FIGHT-
ERS and THE AMERICAN EAGLE and wish to
be enrolled. I am enclosing a self-addressed en-
velope; please send me the membership cards.
Thanks, and I will be looking forward to the next
issues.—Bob Portman.

I recently read the April issue of THE AMER-
ICAN EAGLE. The story was FLIGHT OVER
LISBON and let me tell you it was the best story
I ever read. It was the first issue of THE AMER-

[Turn page]

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ICAN EAGLE I ever bought. I also bought the Summer issue and it was swell. Keep on writing some more good stories about the American Eagle.

I also am sending the application to join The Lone Eagles of America, and I am also sending for the twelve pictures of World War Aces. Keep up the good work.—**Bob Davis.**

Welcome to the outfit, guys. And please be active members as deadheads don't belong in these times. We are anxious to give you the next report. It comes from a guy who is fighting for Uncle Sam and it is a pity our handwriting experts couldn't figure out his last name. We can just introduce him as Aviation Cadet Nicholas DeS----- Get us straight on this, Nickie! Anyway, Nick puts his flaps down and lands with this bit of intelligence:

I tried to join your outfit a few years back, when I was a kid and a civilian. Now I am an aviation cadet in the Army Air Force. I still want to be a member of your outfit. How about it? I've read every single issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE and SKY FIGHTERS. That's straight stuff. I've been reading air-war magazines since I was nine years old, and that was eleven years ago.

Whatever happened to George Bruce and his great novels? I've read everything from Charles Dickens to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, and I still will take George Bruce's stark tragedies over any one of them.

I'm not afflicted with melancholia or anything like it, but, being a sentimentalist, I like World War I stories and especially those by George Bruce.

Please enroll me as a member and a pen pal. I'd like to get into this swapping game, too. How about it? How can you refuse a fellow who is flying for his country?

Enclosed you will find what it takes for a set of World War Ace pictures—send them on the double.

Bruce? He's out in Hollywood, Nick, and has been writing for the movies. George had no peer as an emotion needler, we'll admit. Maybe he'll come back some day.

When you get your wings, let us know, for it is nice to hear right from the feed-bag. We go on to a very familiar contributor to this dept., Irwin Robert Titunik, 3332 Fish Ave., New York City. Bobbing up once more, Bob says for the record:

I've been reading THE AMERICAN EAGLE for quite a time, and think it's swell. I'm a proud member of The Lone Eagles and also The Airmen of America from your Camp, mag, SKY FIGHTERS.

I have just read PRUSSIAN PATSIES and GRASSHOPPER WINGS, and I think they're swell stories.

I also just finished your column (or our column) and please quote me on what I say next:

"To Fritz Duval,

"General Delivery, Texarkana, Texas,

"Dear Skunk:

"Why, you ought to be hung. Remember the R.A.F. and Russian Air Force and then tell me about Germany's superiority! Your brain is so warped I bet it is shaped like a swastika! Well, worst of luck."

Now to get down to business. I am very interested in flying and hope to be a fighter pilot for Uncle Sam. I am 13 years old and want pen pals. I promise to answer all letters.

Say, how's chances of visiting 10 East 40th Street?

I wrote to SKY FIGHTERS and told them about an idea I had and here it is.

Our boys all over the world do have some spare time after feeding the Japs and Jerries samples from U. S. munitions factories, and I heard they like to read exciting stories. I am willing to contribute money to send the boys these mags.

Frederic Beck, Jr., 5 Wilt Ave., Hillsdale, N. J., sticks out his chin and we hope Wilma writes him a thing or two. Are you a wolf in a jeep's clothes, Freddie? We fumigate this place every time we print a letter from a freak like LeCommer. Thanks for the sugar as the C.O. took two bucks out of my pay last week for woolies for Waacs. It is always somethin', pal. And—Masters writes! Not John, but a citizen who might crowd John off the map some day. Charles H. Masters, 1208 Bayridge Ave., Annapolis, Md., looks like he's in.

What's the matter with Lieut. Scott Morgan? How bloodthirsty the old boy has gotten since his last story. Glad to hear you're going to bring back the Swap column.

You ought to censor your department; never let such letters as those of Fritz Duval and Jean LeCommer get in. I'm not saying that you should not print these but put them in a special section so they won't contaminate our letters. I suppose Germany's droops are camping up in Siberia now. There are a lot of them there only they're camping behind barbed wire.

What happened to the story of the cover? Certainly the United Nations have enough spectacular feats to make a good true cover. I think those model plane plans are swell and am going to make some.

Who told you I was going to write to a she-wolf like Wilma? I never correspond with dames. You should keep another special department where a wolf can get the address of another wolf. Methinks that this mag would get an awful big circulation boost.

Well, I guess I've shot my mouth off enough. Worst regards to Jean (as always) and Fritz the Vichy Viper. All things sweet to you, including my sugar ration.—Frederick Beck, Jr.

I never went in for reading flying mags but after reading your April issue of THE AMERICAN EAGLE I find that I've been missing a lot.

On May 18th I was sworn in as a flying cadet, U. S. Naval Reserve. I enter pre-flight training at the University of Georgia on July 9. I'd like very much to hear from guys and gals who are interested in aviation.

This fellow John Masters is really some flyer. Hope having the same name will give me good luck!—Charles H. Masters.

Congratulations, Charlie. You remind us of the day we joined the air corps in 1917, with Oswald. Klipspringer soloed before
[Turn page]

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any of us. Oswald was always a great kiddier and he threw the stick away when he got up with the instructor.

The funny part of it was the instructor threw his away first. Oswald landed on the steps of the San Antonio public library and he was some dizzy when he got out of the office. Oswald got out with his come spinning and he said, "I always heard about them circulatin' libraries. So that's one!" Lots of luck to you.

An Irishman tries to deflate us. We are making an honest living with our column, we want you to know, Mike Flynn! Anyway, here is Flynn's tidy bit of libel that goes to the legal department here. Mike at the mike:

This is my first letter. I have been reading THE AMERICAN EAGLE for some time, though. I get a big kick out of your Prop Wash. (That's in AIR WAR, isn't it?)

Send me that set of World War Ace pictures. Enclosed is all the outrageous requirements.

Please list me as a pen pal. I am 5 ft. 9 in. Also 14 years old, gray eyes, blond hair, and have big feet.

Say, I sympathize with the other guys and girls. There ought to be more World War I stories. They are swell. And all those guys that complain about your stories ought to be shot immediately. After all, a guy has to make a living, even though some vocations are very corny. When are you going to learn better?

Say, how about putting out your four mags once a month? I read all of them and "Around the Hangar" also.

I'll bet some readers are pulling your leg about your mag being best. I met a Yank from Maine who wrote to three mags and told them he liked all best.

You are not used to writing to gentlemen, we can see that, Mike. You cut us deep with your insinuations but squared yourself by admitting you liked our magazine.

Gerald Weissman is briefed next. Gerald lives at 670 West End Avenue, New York City.

I have been reading your magazine for quite some time without writing to the editors. Personally I think Lieut. Scott Morgan's are super. I would like more World War II stories. And, for Heaven's sake, why do you have to print such trash as Fritz Duval's letter? No wonder he didn't give his address, the F.B.I. wants him. Please keep up those model plane plans. I've built two of them already and sent them to the nearest high school.

Enclosed you will find my membership application and a self-addressed envelope for my membership card. Also I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope and three name strips for my portraits of World War Aces.

Well, keep 'em flying!

Nice plug for Morgan, son. We print letters like Duval's to show you that you must be vigilant and to watch for evidence of sabotage everywhere. A client steps up and takes issue with us on Ambrose. Murray Fairbairn, Dumont Route, Paducah, Texas, has this to say about Muley Spink's pal.

Enclosed you will find the inside covers of AIR WAR, THE AMERICAN EAGLE and RAF ACES. For these please send me a set of World War Aces.

I think that your mag is the tops as far as the stories go, but don't you think that John Masters is a little too good? In my opinion GRASS-HOPPER WINGS is rather realistic and more enjoyable than PRUSSIAN PATSIES. PRUSSIAN PATSIES is the same old thing over again. Ambrose gets into trouble and by going on a dangerous mission gets out of it. Keep up the good work

with the stories by Lieut. Scott Morgan. ANZAC WINGS was extra good.

Will you please revive The Swap Column? I have never used it to my advantage yet, but watch my dust!

Could we readers send in stories to your mag? My talents may be limited, but they are here.

Would Ambrose be Ambrose if he did not get into trouble? And if the author doesn't get him out of a mess, how would the little squirt make a living? We mean J. A. Even that little tomato has a right to a roof and some mess once in a while. Of course, that's only our opinion. Morgan ought to be able to write adventure as he is a direct descendant of Morgan the pirate. He has the old buc's chin and you can crack hickory nuts on it.

Now you have heard of priorities, of course, so don't get sore with your old skipper if your letter did not appear in this issue. First come, first served as usual. And all of you take note—**WRITE so we can read it—huh?**

Do Your Part!

The war is going to be a long, hard pull, and each and every one of us must do our part. If you are old enough, give a pint of your blood. It is painless, we assure you, and it will save a life. A pint of blood is worth as much as a hundred dollar war bond, so if you are short of scratch, go to the nearest blood bank and give the equivalent of the C note in good rich American blood.

[Turn page]

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- | | | |
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